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OUT OF TUNE

BY

MYRA M. SMITH

Author of

"DEMANDS OF SOCIETY," ETC., ETC.



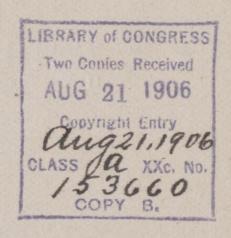
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DEDICATION.

TO MY FRIENDS, MR. AND MRS. MAYHEW AND BABY THEO. JR.



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CHAPTER I.

DISSONANCE.

The light of a beautiful May morning fell brightly upon one of the most flourishing Eastern cities on the Atlantic slope. The day was so beautiful, it brought cheer and comfort to many hearts. Old and young, alike, felt its exhilarating influence; the busy man stepped more briskly to his office; the child bounded on its way to school with a lighter heart; even the newsboys felt its power, and called

out their papers in a clearer staccato.

The spring had arrived this year as it was marked by the calendar; it was the earliest that had been known for many seasons. The mild southern breezes had wholly effaced the remnants of an icy winter. Nature had clothed the barren fields of the suburbs, in verdant robes woven with bright-hued flowers, fairer than any device of man. Merry songsters poured out their notes of joy from leafy dells, filling the air with melody. Myriads of tiny insects mingled their low, sweet hum, with the murmuring brooks, and swelled the mighty chorus till a grand diapason rang throughout the land. Nature's vast orchestra was attuned with perfect rhythm, and sent forth in unrivaled measures, the praises of an omniscient Leader. The seed time had come, bringing its buoyant hopes; and the farmer, upon the uplands, was turning over the soil burying the tiny seeds, in expectation of a rich harvest.

But, all these charms of nature fell powerless upon a restless maiden. The balmy spring, with its bright sunshine, and green fields, its budding flowers, and singing birds, touched no responsive chord in the heart of Violet Morriton. The sweet harmonies of an awakened earth made no melody within her soul; they only served to incite the struggling spirit to greater activity. The glorious light of heaven which flooded the room was unnoticed, by the fair occupant.

Even the mild, southern breeze, stealing through the open casement, rustling the silken draperies, fanning the troubled brow, and tossing the straying tresses about in its grasp,

gave her no consciousness of its presence.

A letter, which the morning's mail had brought, engrossed the mind to the exclusion of all other subjects. To the eye of the casual observer, there was nothing in the correspondence to cause such an intense state of preoccupation; but, to the recipient who read between the lines, what was not permitted for others, there was sufficient ground for great anxiety. Violet had eagerly torn open the envelope, taken out the letter expecting to receive some pleasing information. She read it so hastily, at first, she did not fully comprehend all its details; a second time, she slowly scanned the lines, with a disappointed look, thinking, perhaps, her eyes might have led her astray; a third time, she carefully noted its contents, reading the lines aloud, with the utmost precision:

"MY DEAR VIOLET:--

"I regret, exceedingly, to write you that I shall be unable to accompany you on the proposed European trip, as we had arranged. Since I saw you, when all our plans seemed to have been matured, and everything promised a most enjoyable outing, many little things have arisen as a hinderance; I have been able, however, to surmount them all,

till this last most imperative one.

"Aunt Annie Vaughan has had a severe attack of pleurisy; she has been very ill nearly a month, and at times, we have had serious doubts of her recovery. I rejoice that now she is slowly gaining, though still very weak. Her physicians recommend a change of scene and climate, to fully restore the wasted system. It has been decided that she will spend the summer at Saratoga Springs, on account of its healing waters, and pure air. She thought the change might be beneficial, if I could be with her, though she did not mention it, thinking she might deprive me of the in-

tended ocean trip. As soon as I learned the situation, I immediately told her, at the Doctor's suggestion, that I would gladly accompany her, and remain through the summer. I am extremely sorry to disappoint you, dear Vi, but know that under the existing circumstances you would wish me to do as I have done, and that your generous heart would have led you in the same way that I have been led.

"Aunt Annie has been so kind and indulgent, watching over my life with a mother's interest, that I feel as though whatever little kindness I may be able to render her would be no sacrifice. Only those who have been deprived of a mother's careful protection can appreciate the wealth of love which Auntie has showered upon me. No thought of any recompense for the great care and tender solicitude has prompted me to spend the summer with her, only the knowledge that I can, in a measure, alleviate her sufferings, and loneliness, and help brighten the dreary days of an invalid. As far as I am personally concerned, it is immaterial, whether I am with you viewing the wonders of the old world, at home with my loved ones, or with Auntie; I trust I shall be in the right place, and know I shall be

happy in making others so.

"I learn, also, that my decision enables Nora, her maid, to spend two months with her parents in Scotland; they had written her to come home, that they might see her once more while they lived; she had not replied, she was so perplexed about being in both places at the same time, as she was inclined. You know, Vi, how utterly impossible it is for mortals to be ubiquitous, if they do attempt it! Imagine, if you can, such faithfulness, that one would hesitate to take a vacation after serving twenty years. It quite equals that of the patriarch Jacob serving so untiringly for his Rachel. I think your name of 'Nora the faithful' most appropriate. Nora gave me her blessing, when she learned that I would care for her mistress, and gladly sent the cheering news to the anxious McNeils. She will go with us to the Springs; remain a short time till we are fairly settled, and then sail for the Scottish Highlands.

"The arrangement seems to be very satisfactory on all sides; the Doctor will make us a short visit, if his practice permits. Each of the girls have different plans for the summer. Ruth expects to spend the month of August, with a Vassar friend at the Adirondacks, and both will look in upon us on their way. Hilda takes an outing at Bar Harbor, Old Orchard, and other seaside resorts in Maine, with Cousin Louise, in July; afterwards, she will return, and care for the Doctor during my absence.

"I think one great cause of Auntie's despondency was the dread of having me so far away exposed to the 'perils of the deep;' and though sorry to disappoint you, I am pleased

to be with her.

"Dear Violet, I find the note which I intended to be only a short one is lengthening into a volume, and I must refrain from further regrets. Yet, in closing I would mention the fact that Bee Moreland is staying with her parents, at the old homestead. You may have learned that she has been living in a very secluded manner during the past year, having been deprived, by death, of two dear ones. band died of paralysis after an illness of a few weeks. He committed his fondly cherished mother to the tender care of his devoted wife who promised to alleviate her sorrows, and watch over her remaining years. A few short months released Bee from the pleasing promise. The loving mother grieved so deeply over the loss of her only child, the tension of the nerves grew, more and more, relaxed making the frail threads of life so weak, the heart, that mighty shuttle of mortal machinery, could no longer perform its functions. One beautiful Sabbath evening, at sunset, she departed to join the loved ones in the home beyond.

"I think Bee would answer your needs in every respect, if she could be persuaded to accompany you. She is a thorough conversationalist, both in French and German, and would be of invaluable service, as she has visited all places of interest on the continent. Though you always kept her at a distance, she was one of your admirers, and

I think might be induced to go with you, as she has no ties to prevent, if you were to inform her of the situation, and

ask her to fill my place.

"I trust this announcement will in no wise diconcert you, or cause any alteration in the original plans; only invite Beatrice to accompany you, and I can safely promise one of the brightest, and most enjoyable outings of your life. That you may have a fair voyage, and a pleasant trip is the most sincere wish of your loving friend,

MARY ARTHURS."

"P. S. Let me know your decision in regard to Bee; also, whether she accepts; and once more, in closing I would express the deepest of regrets at my inability to be

with you. Good-bye. M. A."

"Just what I might have expected! Nothing more or less! I might have known that my plans would end in failure! Life has always brought me failures, and disasters. Truly there is nothing sure in the world, only death, and, even that one cannot have when he wishes; it usually steals upon us unawares. What a poor, blind, trusting idiot I have been to imagine a happy summer was in the prospective with Mary. Surely the Fates are unpropitious, and the trip must be postponed. Well, submission, in my case, is not easy, nor to be desired," she exclaimed, as she tossed the letter upon the table, and begun pacing the floor with impatient strides. Faster and faster, rushed the disappointed girl till she sank exhausted into the depths of a luxurious easy chair. Many moments glided swiftly, and quietly away; but, she gave no heed to the flight of time; she was too much engaged in the entertainment of anxious forebodings surging through the throbbing brain. At length she broke the silence, saying, "I am thankful for one thing, that I do not possess the spirit of sacrifice which rules Mary. I have no doubt her Aunt is convalescent, and needs recruiting, at the Springs; but, why Mary should be obliged to become her attendant, and companion through

the whole summer, I cannot conceive. Moreover, I know she was anticipating a pleasant sojourn; and, really, she needs recruiting herself, judging from the many cares which she has borne during the past winter; though, it is always so with unselfish persons; they are never appreciated. We accept their willing sacrifice, without a murmur, as if it were a duty which they owed us, in some inexplicable manner. I wonder why she does not invite the devoted paragon, Bee to fill her place, in that quarter. From my reasoning, nothing could be more appropriate, especially when 'charity begins at home.' Wonders will never cease, when I invite Beatrice Moreland to accompany me; or consider her an intimate friend."

The soliloquy ended in a burst of merriment which rang sweetly through the room, though the lips were parted in disdainful derision. Memory had most unexpectedly brought to mind, the lines of an old poem learned in early childhood; she tried, in vain, to banish the ringing meters; but, they only repeated themselves in perfect rhythm.

"How doth the little busy bee Improve each shining hour, And gather honey all the day From every op'ning flower."

"Heigh, ho! I must not indulge in frivolity; this is too serious a matter to be met by youthful reminiscences. I wonder why it is," she asked herself, "that in the midst of all my sorrows, or disappointments, there runs a vein of humor. I am actually afraid something ludicrous may present itself at a funeral. However, it must be this peculiar trait of character which enables me to preserve 'the even tenor of my way,' and the calm demeanor to the world in general And lest those human harpies, the critics of society may have refreshment from my despondency, I will still conceal my real feelings beneath a smiling exterior. It does seem as though I was never to see the other country. Once, have I been frustrated when the brightest of hopes promised a happy fruition; again, the second time, I must

crush these longings, and resign myself to the inevitable. I am utterly incredulous as regards Mary's theory that everything is for the best, and we should bow in sweet sub-

mission to the chastening rod, without a murmur."

How much depends upon the trivial things of this world! The slightest deviation from the natural course causes a series of events to arise, which bring such unexpected results, that one wonders at the magic power of time, and questions if a few brief hours could possibly make such a change in a course which hitherto was apparently only a monotonous routine. Truly, we know not "what a day may bring forth!"

Sometimes, a chain of circumstances is so strongly forged, that frail humanity cannot extricate itself from the powerful grasp. Every struggle is ineffectual, and only increases the power of the adamantine coils around the unyielding victim, as the pressure upon the sides of an arch tends to strengthen the structure.

We imagine we are sailing safely along on the voyage of life, with sunny skies and fair winds which bespeak a prosperous journey; suddenly, the way is obscured with clouds; the bright sun is hidden; dense fog veils the guiding light making the path so hazardous to pursue, that we shrink from its dangers, though a trusty pilot watches at the helm. Our barque is wrecked upon the shoals of fear!

Wreckage always follows disaster, whether on land or sea. It involves much besides itself; not only the clinging weak, but the valiant strong. It reaches forth, with iron hand, till its force is spent by the circling waves on the

distant shore.

Wrecks of life lie scattered throughout our midst; some were utterly ruined, when they dashed upon the cruel rocks of despair; others are but slightly injured, awaiting a helping hand to gain their former strength, and again speed forth upon their mission.

Will Violet Morriton blindly refuse a friendly hand extended to save her life from being wrecked, and restore

harmony to the craving heart!

CHAPTER II.

MORRITON HOUSE.

THE Morriton mansion was situated upon one of the finest and most select avenues of the city. It was an imposing structure of brick and brown stone. The style of architecture was of no special order; a tower at the northwestern portion, with its many-pointed roof, and beautiful pinnacles gave it a Gothic appearance; while, upon the south and east, a colonnade of fluted columns with capitals bearing the rich carving of the classic acanthus presented the Corinthian order. This colonnade supported a spacious balcony, the entire length of the sides of the mansion, which overlooked a very beautiful court; broad marble steps led from verandas through mosaic walks to a marble fountain. Under the shade of palms growing luxuriantly from bronze urns, tempting seats invited one to rest; while the perfume of rare exotics, mingling with the splashing waters carried one away to a distant southern clime, or lulled the senses into dreams of fairy-land.

The court was screened from the curious eye of the public, by a small park into which it led. Here, majestic elms drooped their pendent branches into emerald arbors; noble oaks, and stately catalpas flung their cool, retreating shadows around. Shrubs, as beautiful as those of Paradise, blossomed profusely; rhododendrons, and hydrangeas rivaled each other in their gorgeous beauty; the mock-orange, or syringa dropped its aromatic flowers like snow-flakes upon the velvet sward, in company with the hawthorn; the pink and white petals of the deutzia fell softly as a frost upon a summer's night; wisteria, clematis, and honey-suckle twined trustingly around trellises in prolific splendor; roses in almost endless varieties abounded in all parts.

Every path in the luxuriant garden, began and diverged from a large summer-house standing in the centre; its design was that of an octagon, and its arrangement a work of art. Climbing roses decorated the many sides in a most unique manner, enhancing its beauty with the brilliant trumpet flower, and making with their delicate net-work of foliage a perfect bower of bloom. Within this charming retreat were couches and chairs for rest or meditation. It seemed a perfect abode of happiness, and contentment; Fair as we may suppose the Garden of Eden to have been, before the arch deceiver intruded upon the domains of our ancestry, and beguiled the maternal ear. Yet, as in the primitive state, the spirit of discord had crept in, and marred the harmony of Unie's bower.

The interior of Morriton House was almost palatial in its adornment. The reception room, into which one entered from the vestibule being an exhibition of modern art. Clear white marble formed the floor; frescoes in the palest tint of Nile green covered the walls, with cornices of delicately, carved acanthus. The ceiling was deeply paneled in white, Nile green and gold; the woodwork was of white enamel, ornamented with papier-mache and gold. Draperies of filmy lace, and silk veiled the windows. A marble stairway with richly carved balustrade led to the rooms above.

The same style was observed in the drawing room, with the exception of the mural decorations, which consisted of silken tapestries. Heavy brocaded satin portieres, in oldgold and green, separated from other rooms; rich Oriental rugs of neutral tints harmonized with the general tone.

The library, one of the most beautiful rooms in the whole mansion, was finished in solid rosewood. Large bookcases, and cabinets were of the same choice material. The floor was fine mosaic; the coloring was that deep rich tint of red which blended with everything, and gave a roseate hue throughout the whole. The long windows furnished a lovely view of the court, upon which they opened. The cases were filled with the choicest literature from the best authors. Books, of all kinds, were visible: histories, biographies and poetical works from the earliest, to the present

time; philosophical writings, and treaties upon abstruse subjects; writings from Spencer, Huxley, and Darwin; works of fiction, and the current magazines of the day, even to the daily newspapers. It was a place for mental recreation, and gave a marked evidence of the taste of its possessor. Here, free from the trials, and irritations of life, one could be in unison with his favorite author, and roam with him untrammeled through the fields of research, or investigation. Ample accommodation was provided for several, with no fear of intrusion.

Between the library and drawing room lay a pleasant apartment called the morning room; it had a southern exposure upon the garden and court. It was usually occupied by the family during the early portion of the day. Sliding panels opened into a marble corridor, leading from

the reception room and hall to the court.

A large music room opened on the opposite side of the corridor; it was nearly circular with a high, arched ceiling, and was finished in mahogany. Windows of exquisite coloring bearing the portraits of the most celebrated composers admitted the sunlight, in diffusing rays of prismatic beauty. Musical instruments, both large and small, were seen; a pipe organ, with mahogany case, stood at one side of the room; two grand pianos, of the best workmanship, invited the artist to strike their chords, and free the imprisoned harmony contained within; guitars and violins lay in convenient places awaiting a skilled hand. This room, also, showed the taste of its possessor, and the high appreciation of the art of music.

Adjoining this was a commodious dining room, in antique oak; the walls were paneled with the richly grained wood, surmounted by a heavy cornice of delicately carved oak-leaves and acorns. The ceiling consisted of deep panels in rich, soft shades of brown and gold; a mantle, and sideboard of the same highly-polished wood ornamented with the foliage and fruit, of this "monarch of the forest," increased the splendor of the sumptuous apartment.

Facing the east were broad windows affording a delightful

view of the court, and contiguous park.

All these rooms could easily be thrown into a grand salon, by means of secret appliances, for receptions, musical and literary entertainments, and were often filled by friends of the family. Beyond these, lay those necessary for household purposes; they were conveniently arranged, and as perfect in all their appointments as the others, and bordered upon the park.

The second story afforded chambers, dressing rooms, and boudoirs; also a charming sitting room, which opened upon a broad balcony overlooking the beautiful court, and park. It was a most inviting place for rest and relaxation; and some member of the family could usually be found en-

joying its sweet seclusion.

Comfortable quarters were afforded the domestics in the third story. They were given a parlor for their exclusive use; also, a small library of the standard works. An upright piano contributed to their enjoyment. Their rooms were as daintily furnished as any; Mr. and Mrs. Morriton, believing that in order to secure the best service from their help, they should be treated with respect, and provision made for their comfort. When expostulated with once upon this idea, by one of her intimate friends, Mrs. Morriton routed her opposer by asking these pertinent questions: "How can I expect my girls to handle my bric-a-brac carefully, if they are strangers to it? How can they keep the furniture perfectly in order, if I only allow them, the old dilapidated pieces?" Suffice to say, she was troubled with no more remonstrances.

The mansion had been built only a few years before, by a prosperous New York merchant, who having met with reverses by the turn of fortune's wheel, was obliged to sacrifice his elegant home, and place it upon the market as merchandise. Mr. Morriton, in search of a house, became its fortunate purchaser, and by means of additions, and extensive alterations had increased its former splendor to its present magnificence.

CHAPTER III.

THE WEAK CONFOUND THE WISE.

THE Morritons had resided nearly ten years, in their present home. Previous to that time, they had been citizens of the beautiful metropolis of the Old Bay State. Owing to circumstances connected with an idolized daughter, they had deemed it best to sunder the associations clustered around the old home, and seek one more remote, amid new scenes.

Maurice Morriton had reached the meridian of life. He was tall and portly in figure, and possessed in a large degree, that noble, stately appearance which, at once, proclaimed him a leader among men, rather than a follower. He was of sanguine temperament, with a high, broad forehead indicative of great mental reserve force; a Roman nose showing power; a large, clear-cut mouth, with full rounded chin, firmly moulded; deep, blue eyes beamed from heavy eyebrows, conveying the knowledge that whatever decision their possessor rendered, it was fairly meted out with justice and mildness. His opinions were the results of concentrated thought, and careful consideration.

Mr. Morriton had commenced his business career as a lawyer. A large circle of influential friends, and acquaint-ances was instrumental in yielding him a most successful practice. The sterling qualities of his grand integrity gained him a reputation, but rarely equaled. The law of ethics emanating from the golden rule, governed his judgment, at all times, and made him respected, while feared among his apponents. His undaunted ambition, and unswerving principles had gained him a judgeship which he had most ably filled a number of years, with great com-

mendation from the public.

Prosperity seemed to attend him in every undertaking. In whatever way he turned his attention, fortune smiled

upon him, with her brightest rays. "Morriton's ventures always succeed!" says one. "They're safe!" said another. On the introduction of any new enterprise these queries were often made: "Has he invested?" "Has he sanctioned it?" "Does he think it safe?" "Does he consider the securities good? If he does, count me in."

He had invested largely in railroad stocks, and mines; he was a shareholder in several companies of trust, and every venture had proved a paying investment. It was commonly reported that everything he touched turned to gold. He had become a multi-millionaire by his own ex-

ertions, and ranked as a great philanthropist.

At the time of his removal from his native city, he had severed his connection with the bar, and all offices of public trust. His income although princely, had not at that time reached its present magnitude. The purchase of an abandoned mine, apparently worthless, in which he was formerly a large owner, had yielded most unexpectedly enormous returns, and given him the greater portion of his present fortune.

Helen Morriton was her husband's chief counsellor; she was beautiful, not only in person, but in character; her dark eyes, with their rich pansy coloring, still retained the brilliancy of youth. She was modest and retiring by nature, and a favorite with all. Morriton had been attracted by her quiet, unassuming ways, even in childhood, and became her champion. The attraction was mutual, increasing through the days of youth, till it reached consummation in the marriage vows, during the early years of manhood. He had faithfully kept the pledge of honor, given at the altar, and had watched over all her ways with a loving solicitude.

The traits of character exhibited in childhood grew more developed in the woman, making her endeared to all. In the days of her youth she had remembered the Creator, and found the years as they drew nigh, years of pleasantness. Though a frail, clinging, and trusting wife, she was a powerful advocate. She was in unison with the Maker and her

fellow-creatures. Her tranquility allayed discordant jars and filled her life with consonance.

When the mine, in which Mr. Morriton had invested a large amount of capital, had been abandoned as practically worthless, from the expenses exceeding the returns, and yielding no profits, he had mentioned the fact to his wife; as he was accustomed to relate the incidents of the day on his return.

"What do you imagine has happened, Helen?" he asked. And without waiting for an answer, he continued, "the C. & C. Mine has gone to smash; has been sinking money for the past two months; water filling the shaft faster than the engine, working night and day, can pump it out. Jones said it would pay immensely, and I took his word, and invested; but, they did not expect to find the water, so no one is at fault, and we all took the risk."

"Which way did the water come in?" inquired the inter-

ested listener, in an anxious voice.

""Which way!" repeated he; "why you dear little philosopher, what difference could it possibly make, whether

one way, or another?"

"Of course, Maurice, you know I do not understand about such things," she answered. "But, don't you think they might sink a shaft in the opposite direction, get clear of the water, and continue working the mine?"

"Oh, no, my dear! It would be most impracticable; it would amount only to the burial of a fortune!" he replied. "I will see, however, which way the water appeared." He glanced over a letter taken from his pocket, and read as follows: "signs of moisture were noticed, several days, upon the right; these increased till we gradually found ourselves in water, and were obliged to stop operations. Every available means has been used to exhaust the flow of water, but, so far, we have been unsuccessful, after a month's trial. We may as well try to pump up a river, as to empty the water from the shaft. It remains from ten to twenty feet deep. Is it sufficiently clear to you, now?" he inquired wonderingly.

"Yes!" she responded. I think, perhaps, they may have found a subterranean lake, and were unable to exhaust it; they might sink the shaft at the left, several hundred feet away, and find plenty of metal; don't you think so, Maurice?"

"I am afraid I don't, Helen!" said the unconvinced man. "You cannot find a rich lode simply by a little digging. Besides, the owners, or shareholders will advance no more

money."

"Why don't you purchase the mine yourself, and see if it can be done?" she asked. "Think of those poor miners; their families may be destitute, and suffering from the failure of the mine, on which they depended for support, and you might keep them from the pangs of hunger," she added with a beseeching tone, turning her expressive eyes upon him.

"Really, Helen, you are too bad, you know I cannot resist the tender pleading of your sympathetic eyes!" cried Mr. Morriton. "But, in this case, I dare not comply with your suggestion, or wishes; it is too hazardous to attempt; we will, simply, let the whole matter drop, for the present,

and, perhaps, for all time."

"Just as you think, Maurice; whatever you do, I am assured will be for the best; I was only trying to help you out of your difficulties, by my little suggestions," she added,

as if to excuse herself for having a different opinion.

The matter did not drop, however; again and again, it presented itself, each time sinking deeper, and taking firmer hold, till it found a resting place from which it could not be uprooted. Thoroughly he weighed the "pros and cons," deciding to obtain control of the mine, and follow out the hazardous proposition of his wife. He did this, against his own judgment, after the most penetrating investigation, relying more upon her sanguine hopes than his own fears. The basis of his decision rested upon the efficient help which she had rendered in the past. Search, as deeply as he would, he could find no instance wherein her judgment was at fault. Truly she was a helpmeet, in every sense.

"I will answer those pleading eyes, and give the poor fathers a chance to earn bread for their children; if I sink a few more thousands, it will not matter a great deal," he told himself. "I'll take the risk, and prove its verity or falsity; a failure will only show the same results which experts have experienced, while a success will be marvellous. If it should succeed, I shall think my wife possesses the

spirit of divination, or some occult power."

Mr. Morriton, as president of the Company, called a meeting of the stockholders, and laid the proposition before them; he explained, thoroughly, his plans, and concluded, by saying, "any who may wish to remain with me in the enterprise, I shall be pleased to have do so; it is a great venture, in which I can assure no one of any returns; each of you must take your own risk upon an uncertainty, as I am doing. Those who may wish to withdraw their capital from the company may dispose of their shares at par; I will pay, myself, one hundred cents on the dollar, as I propose taking all the remaining stock."

Some of the members asked each other, at the adjournment of the meeting, "Has Morriton lost his senses?" "Is he in his dotage?" "Has he so much money, he wishes to sink it?" Others said, "I shall run no more risks; once is sufficient. I shall certainly avail myself of the opportunity of getting out of the business without any loss!"

They acted accordingly upon their own convictions, and withdrew from the company, with other disaffected ones holding similar views, on the receipt of a full equivalent. The majority remained with Morriton, well-pleased that he should act as manager, considering themselves fortunate in securing his valuable services. They, also, said, "we will furnish more money, if you wish, and stand by you till the last, knowing if you win, we shall; we'll sink or swim together, old boy!"

Operations were immediately begun for the sinking of a new shaft about five hundred feet from the old one. And, in course of time, the cheering news was flashed across the wires, that success crowned their efforts; there was an abundance of the precious metal found nearer the surface.

"Morriton," asked one of the members at a meeting of the board, "how in the name of all that is reasonable, did you think of such a scheme?"

"I did not," he answered amusingly. "I entered into it, as blindly as any of you, and without one particle of

faith, either."

"Explain yourself, please, and give us the key of the mys-

tery," they cried with one accord.

"Well, gentlemen, I will," he answered. "It was entirely my wife's suggestion; I was telling her of the failure of the mine, when she innocently asked, 'why don't you sink another shaft in the opposite direction?' I scouted at the idea, but she looked up to me so confidingly, and said she thought it would be successful, I could not resist. Then she entreated so beseechingly in behalf of the poor miners, I had not the heart to refuse; neither could I get rid of the matter, so, I was compelled to act. Now, you have the solution of the whole matter in a nutshell."

"When I married," he continued, as if in extenuation "my wife possessed a fair income; I fell into the habit of consulting her in regard to investments, and never invested a cent without her entire approval, though often contrary to my own judgment. I found her suggestions valuable, though sometimes illogical. The habit has grown, until it has become a custom for me to consult her in regard to all the affairs of life, business, or otherwise, and whatever success I may have achieved, my friends, is wholly attributable to her. And who can have a greater interest in our affairs, than those whom we have selected as the partners for life, the sharers of our joys and sorrows?"

Silence followed this pertinent question, while a medley of hopes and fears ran through the mind of every husband. The awkwardness of the situation was broken by one rising and saying, "I would motion that a vote of thanks be extended to this estimable lady, for her valuable suggestions;

also, that the present name of the mine be changed to that

of 'The Helena,' in honor of our President's wife."

The motion was unanimously carried amidst a burst of applause, and modestly accepted by Mr. Morriton, replying, "Friends, I accept your great kindness, in behalf of Mrs. Morriton; but, promise you she will be greatly surprised, at such a proceeding, as she is not of those women who

utter that self-satisfied remark, 'I told you so.'

"I have been thinking," said he, "that we might very profitably raise the wages of the miners. (This idea, also, is not wholly my own.) This mine is yielding beyond all expectations; even beyond our dreams, and we can help the poor deserving toilers, by a better competence. And, gentlemen, would it not be advisable to build a few substantial homes for them? Davis told me, on his return, that their dwellings were but miserable hovels. pleasant little cottage would be most attractive to them, after the arduous toil of the day, and encourage them in their great struggle for existence. An advance in the wages would allow them to pay a mere nominal rent for the house, which could be credited as payment by them on their own property. I really think it would awaken a new stimulus among them, and keep them, in a measure, away from the gambling dens, by showing that we had an interest in their welfare. Shall we do it?"

"Yes, yes!" vociferated the members, in the best of humors. We'll build cottages, or even a whole township, if you say so!" cried one enthusiastically. Let us give them at any rate, a schoolhouse, and a chapel, as promoters of morals. As Morriton says we can afford it, and at all hazards, it will do honor to the company, and may influence others to do likewise, especially if it is a success."

"I am pleased that these propositions meet your hearty approval," answered Mr. Morriton; "and that you coincide in the advancement of the men. Build all the homes, and schoolhouses, you choose, but, please leave the chapel for my better-half, as she is already planning for it. Pardon

me, for mentioning it; but, as the subject under consideration needs some explanation, I give it. After the new vein had been found, I asked her, how she knew there was more metal in another direction, and she replied, 'I did not; but the Saviour did, and used me as an instrument in proposing it, and if you do not object, I will build a little chapel where the children can go, and learn of His great love for them.'

"Of course, I could not object to such a noble proposition, or place any stumbling-blocks in the way, by propounding speculative theories. You know the position which I hold upon the matter; a similar one to yours, I believe, that religion is but a pleasing illusion founded upon a mythical history; and, that all knowledge of heaven is but an alluring fallacy; as no one has ever returned from that region, to confirm the wonderful fancies. It is absolutely harmless, and cannot injure its possessor unless be becomes an incorrigible fanatic. Should I ever become attracted to the faith, it will be from the daily illustration which I see exhibited in my household. Now, you understand the matter, as it stands, with all its details, I think."

The meeting adjourned after these remarks; and the members returned to their customary vocations, carrying with them much food for reflection. It was a new article of diet, entirely foreign to their taste; and, they really were ignorant of the process of assimilation; after dallying

awhile with it, they rejected it, as unpalatable.

"A strange way for the tide to turn, isn't it?" asked one, during the homeward walk. "Who would, ever, have supposed that Morriton owed his great success, and prosperity to his wife! Or that such a frail little woman possessed so much executive ability! Or that his powerful intellect could be increased by her astute wisdom!"

"A most forcible elucidation of the old saying that 'Truth is stranger than Fiction,'" answered his friend. "I was so amazed at the course of events, I could think of nothing else. I considered the chapel building but a joke, simply proposed on the spur of the moment, in a burst of

enthusiasm, and you can only imagine my bewilderment when I found it was actually meant. Who ever heard before, of a meeting of the directors of a mining company discussing the question of ethics? I never expected to, much less, to become a participant of one! Wonders will never cease, when a party of evolutionists appear on the stage of action as Christian philanthropists!"

"True, but we are living in a age of progress, and unheard of things are happening every day!" remarked the

other, as they separated.

The members of the Helena Mining Company had that day, heard of something more valuable than gold or silver. Truly, a little leaven had leavened the whole! And, the weak had been chosen to confound the wise!

Who can say that a good man's steps are not ordered by

the Lord!

CHAPTER IV.

A Young Logician.

THE Morriton household numbered eight; in addition to the parents, there were five children. Hervey Vaughan, the eldest, a young man of thirty years; the twins, Violet and Eunice, a few years younger; Herbert, a young man of five and twenty, and Harry, the youngest, a lad of twenty.

Miss Eliza, a maiden sister of Mr. Morriton, completed the family circle; she was known as Aunt Lida, and en-

deared to every member.

The possession of great wealth had enabled the fond father to gratify the wishes of his children in regard to education. They availed themselves of every advantage attainable, and excelled in whatever branch their individual tastes led them to attempt, much to the gratification of their parents and instructors.

Mr. Morriton and his wife believed in the education of young men for some profession; and, that wealth, instead of barring rich men's sons from the fields of science, should open wider avenues for research. The children were early trained to habits of industry, and the dignity of independence.

He had been greatly disappointed, at the choice of profession made by the eldest son. He desired that he might, from the study of law, rank among the eminent jurists of the age. When he saw that his boy held not the least inclination towards a legal course, and, even, avoided an argument, but was constantly searching out the derivation of words, their classification, roots, and every item of knowledge, which the languages afforded, he abandoned the wish, and encouraged him so zealously to prosecute his studies as a philologist, that the son did not even know of the parental longing. He only uttered one complaint concerning it: "We'll not spoil an excellent professor for a small

pettifogger!" And this decision showed more gratification

than disappointment.

Hervey Morriton inherited traits of character from each parent; from his father, he had taken the habit of deep, penetrating research, which enabled him to thoroughly exhaust a subject before he dropped it; and even then, to recur to it, subject it to the same process hoping to gain further information from more light being thrown upon it. He was persistent and untiring in all his undertakings. The study of letters, and languages fascinated him from the learning of the alphabet. Even, in childhood, his favorite hobby absorbed him to the exclusion of all other recreations; so diligent was he in the pursuit of knowledge that health was often impaired.

Grave apprehensions had been felt that he might fall an early victim to that dreaded New England disease of consumption. Upon the completion of his collegiate studies, he immediately accepted a professorship in one of the leading American colleges. He had striven zealously for the advancement of his pupils, four years, when his incessant labors completely prostrated him. A year's rest, with absolute freedom from study was prescribed by the attendant physician. Although greatly disappointed at the interruption of his aspirations, he was comforted by the permission

to read two hours out of the twenty-four.

"Rest, is what you need, my young man, complete rest!" said the doctor. "No more late hours of study; you are 'burning the candle at both ends,' as the old saying goes. If you will follow my directions carefully, and not think yourself wiser than your elders in regard to physical and medical science, you will come out all right. But you must avoid over-exertion of any kind, and never indulge in any pursuit, either manual or mental, when you feel fatigued. You see, we men of medicine must work in unison with our patients; without their co-operation, our attempts are worthless. We will conquer this weariness, if you agree to the conditions; do you?"

"Yes, doctor, I will!" Hervey answered promptly. "I will do more even than you require. I will forego the two-hours' permitted reading, as I know they would only serve to make me discontented, and unhappy, when they had passed. I will not return to my beloved books till you grant a full permission. I will search as diligently for the fountain of health, as the mortals of old searched for their fabled fountain of perennial youth. Though I have the advantage of them concerning its location, and I thank you most heartily for the information," he added with twinkling eyes.

"Right, you are, my boy! You have the proper material for a strong man, if you only keep your foundation of youth strong," replied Doctor Ernest. "I find that even at the beginning, you are wiser than your elders, in a prohibition of all labors. I merely recommended it, to prevent homesickness, and discouragement. I would advise you to take a trip to the mountains, anywhere you please. Remain as much as possible out of doors, and you might,

also, indulge moderately in athletic sports."

"I am afraid I shall never become an athlete, though I

am in Ernest hands!" retorted Hervey.

"Well, by, by! I'll risk you, joking at my expense. Remember, no books, till I give permission," cautiously remarked the physician, as he departed with a light heart, knowing that his advice and instruction would be fully carried out.

Hervey resembled the mother in temperament; he possessed the same sweet spirit of resignation which dominated her life; it enabled him to lay aside his own plans for awhile, and to be as faithful in his endeavors for restoration, as he had been in the pursuit of knowledge. The same beautiful deep eyes spoke eloquently of kindred virtues. The features inclined more to the maternal side; though the figure, with its commanding height and delicate poise, resembled the paternal.

Mr. Morriton decided to accompany his son to the

mountains. He selected a pleasant home in a charming rural village in the old Granite State, remained a week and left him with Harry. "Do try and be careful!" he admonished in parting. I wish to see a marked improvement on your return, and Harry, I can testify, will not allow you to mourn for home."

"Better believe, I'll not, pa, if I have to turn a king's jester to prevent it!" answered Harry with sparkling eyes. "No studies, no books, nothing only the great book of nature spread before our wondering vision; and, we cannot even turn her leaves, only put them under foot. When we get tired of gazing upon the familiar scene we'll explore new fields."

The father returned to his household, greatly relieved by the interest which Harry had so shrewdly shown for Hervey. He related the metaphor, and Aunt Lida surprised them by asking, why they did not permit Harry to remain with him during the entire year, as he seemed such a suitable

person.

Harry Ivan, at this time, was in his nineteenth year; he was a perfect wit, and a natural logician; his keen, blue eyes, bubbling forth in bursts of merriment at repartee indicated a hidden spring of profound depths. He possessed a good physique, never having known a day's illness. He was growing to the stature of a well-developed, and robust man. He was fond of all athletic sports, and led among those of his set.

It was unnecessary for the father to express any fears, concerning the inclination of his youngest child, when the course of his life's work was so plainly delineated in every

way.

"I'd like to be a lawyer, and a judge, and sometime hold a seat in the Supreme Court! I want the highest office attainable!"

"What for, my child? Do you think you can improve the present state of affairs?" asked the delighted father. "O, for several reasons!" answered Harry. "I would like to give some poor abused fellow a better chance; show up the wolf beneath the lamb's clothes. I don't know as I could of myself make any improvement upon the laws of to-day, but they are defective in many places and want remodeling."

He was willingly granted permission to pursue his chosen

profession.

CHAPTER V.

A TRYING SITUATION.

The boys had been three months in their new quarters, when a marked change was noticeable in Hervey's appearance. He had gained in weight; the life-giving ozone of the pure mountain air had quickened the pulses, and improved the retarded circulation, till the blood coursed naturally through the veins and arteries. He could take short walks without fatigue. He passed nearly the whole day out of doors; either riding, walking, boating, or reclining in the hammock. Harry constantly changed their recreation, to keep from "stagnation," he said.

He never allowed many minutes to pass in silence. One evening, while seated upon the piazza, he saw that Hervey was in one of his moods of abstraction; "I must rouse him from that," he thought, or we'll lose all the gain. I wonder where his thoughts are roaming. Hervey! Hervey, old

boy! a penny for your thoughts!" he cried.

"Oh! I was only thinking of home, and wishing I might see the dear ones, for a little while; and I could not help wondering what I should do without you. Your vacation is drawing to a close, and you must soon return to your

studies," answered Hervey.

"Now, see here, old chap!" exclaimed Harry; "your present state does not speak very well for my office of Mentor! Of all discouraging operations, that of building and crossing imaginary bridges is the worst that I know of! The most unprofitable, also; as they usually collapse before completion, and great is the fall thereof!" Did I ever tell you about the joke I played on old P. F.?" he inquired, anxious to lead his mind away from the subject.

"P. F.!" repeated Hervey. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, we boys called Brown, Professor Fossil! He was such an antiquarian, always delving among the ruins of

the past for a curio, or trying to decipher the hieroglyphics

of prehistoric ages," said Harry in explanation.

"Some time ago, we were analyzing sentences, parsing words, and so forth, when the word 'him' fell to me. I thought I would have a little fun at the Professor's expense. I rose after giving a wink to Al. Lewis, a chum at my side. I disposed of the pronoun in this manner: 'him is a proper noun, the first person, singular, and in the nominative case, as it is a subject;' and seated myself amid roars of laughter from the classmates, who knew in an instant, what I was doing."

"'Young man, please explain you new method, whereby you construe 'him' as the subject!' demanded the puzzled

Professor.

"I readily responded. 'H—I—M, stands for Harry Ivan Morriton, therefore, I am the first person singular, and, as I am the subject of consideration, I must be in the nominative case.' I was highly elated, I can assure you to be allowed to strengthen the position which I had taken."

"O Harry, how could you do so! It was most atrocious! And, think of your example to the other members of the

class!"

"I acknowledge it was too bad!" answered Harry. "I felt myself lower in my own estimation, when the Professor placed his owl-like orbs of vision upon me, and said in a very solemn voice, 'Young man, I perceive you have taken the mantle of your father; I also perceive, you are not only a 'subject of consideration,' but, an 'object of interest!' And I perceived that he had taken the 'wind out of my sails,' as the case was a doubtful one. I could just as well be in one, as the other. I even felt a little conscious stricken, and told him afterwards, I would apologize before the class, if he wished it."

"'Oh, no! You had your little joke, and I retaliated; I saw through your motive, from the first, and led you on,

to see if you would land safely,' said the Professor."

"'All's well that ends well!" "exclaimed Hervey. "Your

amusing anecdote has effectually chased away the gloomy

forebodings; and I-"

"I've thought of the greatest scheme out!" interrupted Harry. "I am going to ask the pater to allow me to take a year's rest with you! And, won't we have a glorious time, if he does!"

"He will not permit it," said the elder. "If permission were obtained, I could not avail myself of it, no matter how much I felt inclined. I would not take you away from study; it would be an unpardonable wrong, when you do not re-

quire a rest, with such a physique. O, no, my boy!"

"I don't say as I do now!" retorted the younger. "But don't you think we had better 'take time by the forelock,' lest there might be? I'll write a line to that son of Esculapius, and tell him to intercede for me, by telling the dear ones that 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

"Don't, Harry!" pleaded the suspecting man. "I

know you are proposing it wholly on my account."

"We'll wait, and see what answer my proposition brings. and not wound your conscientious scruples. But, truly, my dear old boy, I would enjoy most exquisitely to pass a year with you, and get acquainted. You are so much older than I am, I never had the chance before; and I would like to gain some fresh ideas, my stock is getting stale. A year will not make much difference with me either; it really would be a deed of kindness for me, to allow Elmer Haskell to win the prize offered for scholarship. We were of the same average, and I could not allow him to excel, without detriment to myself; moreover, he needs it, as his parents are poor, and he is struggling hard for an education. I can easily take the last two years in one, and lose nothing, as I am already familiar with a part of next year's studies from my room-mate. Are you convinced now, that I mean it?"

"Not wholly!" answered Hervey; "though I shall most

gratefully accept your proffered services if I can,"

Harry's letter was a strange mixture of invention, and prevention, and caused great surprise in the household, when its contents were made known. He addressed it to his brother Herbert, in the following manner:

"DEAR ESCULAPIUS:-

"I wish you to consult the heads of the household, the modern philosopher included, upon a most important ques-I wish you to get permission for me to remain with Hervey during his required rest. I know you can present the case in a medical way, far better than I, so I appeal to you. The dear boy is improving it is true; but he really needs me to keep him from his moods of abstraction. Only a few days ago, I found him indulging in a fit of the blues, mourning, I suppose, for the Lares and Penates, of the Morriton household. I do most honestly think I am necessary for his improvement, as he is wondering what he will do without me. It's better for me to take a vacation, now, when I desire it, than later on, when I don't want it. And, who can say that I shall not need one in the future, if I do resemble a modern Hercules! So state the case in all its details, won't you, dear fellow.

"If he is not left in my hands, he may possibly fall into worse; he may fall in love; now, in order to make it clear, I must relate an incident which took place quite recently.

"I was walking hastily across a field and had reached the stone-wall, over which I was preparing to jump, when I spied what I supposed to be a little girl, perched up in a tree, growing close by the wall; she seemed to be piteously looking for assistance, so I said, 'little maid, what can I do for you?'

"'Little maid!' she repeated, without answering my question; 'do you know whom you are addressing, and

how old I am?' she asked with offended dignity.

"'Hav'n't the least idea!' I answered carelessly; 'neither do I expect to learn your age, as you would be the first girl who ever told her age correctly, to my knowledge.'

"'You horrid boy!' she retorted. 'I don't know which is preferable, to sit here, and hear your vile slanders upon my sisters, or be frightened nearly out of my senses!' and her eyes seemed to fill with tears, which you know I never could stand.

"She informed me that on crossing the field, she had become frightened at a cow, and in running away from the dreadful beast, she had dropped one of her slippers. She thought if she waited long enough, some one would come for the animal, when she could descend from her place of

refuge, and obtain the shoe.

"I begun a search for it, immediately and was about giving it up as hopeless, when I discovered a queer-looking object near the cow, which proved to be the slipper. must have taken a zig-zag course in crossing as it was nowhere in the direction she told me. I restored the lost article, which she seemed in no hurry to put on, waiting for me to leave I suppose; but, I had no idea of leaving her, in that situation. Accordingly, I stepped upon one of the projecting stones of the wall, and before she could define my intention, quietly lifted her to the ground. O my! didn't it raise a tempest! I wish you could have seen her. She gave me a stinging box upon the ear, crying out, 'You insolent boy, how dare you do such a thing? Where were you brought up, to so outrage all the proprieties? Have you ever been in the society of ladies?' And, then, she burst into tears.

"The situation was an awkward one; I was just concluding to leave her, and her 'proprieties' to their fate, when she surprised me, by falling; that is, she would if I had no caught her again in my arms. 'For mercy's sake, what is the matter? Are you crying because you are injured, or your dignity offended?' I asked in exasperation. I was getting tired of the scene, and determined to change it some way. 'I often carry my little sister about, though she is older than you; and, sometimes, even my mother; so, you see I am used to helping ladies, and could not resist the

impulse to take you from your uncomfortable perch, where

I can leave you, if you like.' I said by way of apology.

"No, I thank you!' she condescended to reply, apparently appeased by my explanation. 'I think I must have sprained my ankle in running; I remember turning it badly, and falling, when about half way here; but, I was able to reach this spot, and thought it was not injured very much. I find I am mistaken, as I cannot stand.'

"Upon inquiry, I found she was stopping at the same

house that we were, though she was a recent arrival.

"It was 'Hobson's choice,' or none, with her; she was obliged to have me carry her back to the house, in spite

of her vain attempts to get there unaided.

"She's one of those milk and water girls, that is a sort of washed-out complexion; light yellow hair, some call golden; light blue eyes; a pale countenance, which you as a medical man, would term anæmic; though I suppose the poets might rave over her lily-white charms of complexion, and ethereal eyes; while the novelist would describe it as 'cream and roses,' with a string of superlative adjectives. But she has no charms for me, only a little temper, which proves her, of the earth, earthy. You know

I prefer brunettes.

"I concluded I would not outrage the 'proprieties' by asking her name, so waited for her to divulge it; neither, would I give mine unsolicited, so I called her Miss Maid, while she addressed me as Young Hercules. My appearance, with a young lady in my arms caused quite a commotion at the house. Half a dozen girls rushed up, inquiring 'What was the matter?' 'Where I found her?' and numerous other questions all at once. 'Bring her into the parlor please, Mr. Morriton,' cried one, 'and do tell us where you found Miss Darling.' Those curious girls had found me out, some way. After I had left the 'Little Darling,' as her friends call her, I summoned a physician, who found the ankle had received a severe sprain, and would require several weeks to restore it to its normal condition.

"I related the incident to Hervey and he seems greatly interested. He had noticed her from a fancied resemblance to sister Unie. The interest appears mutual, she inquired of me, afterwards, who that interesting young man was with whom she so often saw me; and I set them to entertaining each other one day.

"So I repeat the warning and ask you to intercede in my

behalf as the lesser of two evils.

"Tell the pater I can easily make up the loss of a year's study without the least trouble; in fact, I have already taken part of it, with one of the juniors.

"Answer immediately, and relieve your brother's sus-

pense.

"HARRY IVAN MORRITON."

After deliberate consideration it was decided to accede to Harry's request; not however, from the imaginary evil which he foresaw, but as a most satisfactory arrangement. "It is high time that the brothers knew each other; and, what difference can it make if Harry is a little longer in getting through college?" said Aunt Lida; while she thought she would run up to the mountains if the boys remained there much longer, to see how they were faring, and if the surmises concerning the "Little Darling" had any foundation.

CHAPTER VI.

A CASE OF RECIPROCITY.

ELVA DARLING was one of a party of teachers who were spending a few days at the mountains. They had come for recreation, pleasure, and sight-seeing. The merry company of six were keenly awake to everything of interest transpiring in their vicinity. The original plan had been to stop at North Woodstock a week, and visit all places of attraction in the surrounding country. The exhilarating air had increased the buoyancy of their spirits, till the weary cares of the schoolroom rested undisturbed in the past.

Only a few places had been visited before the accident. Agassiz' Basin, whose deep waters lave the feet of the mighty giant; the Flume with its intricate windings, through rocky defiles, even to the summit where the mountain torrent springs into life; and, the Pool which lies deep within the forest glades, as a sylvan picture framed in emerald

tints, by Nature's wondrous hand.

Miss Darling's mishap filled her friends with consternation, while they sadly lamented the state of affairs.

"What shall we do?" asked one.

"What an awful shame!" exclaimed another.

"We will postpone our sight-seeing awhile and nurse you, Elva, dear, and who knows but that you may be as well as ever in a few days!" said Miss Flora Morey, the recognized leader of the six, hoping to raise their spirits by her en-

couraging words.

"No! no! I cannot allow it!" answered Elva. "But, I thank you most heartily for the intended kindness. I know my accident was only the result of my own heedlessness, and as far as possible I will bear it alone. I shall permit none of you to suffer for it. I will not deprive you of any enjoyment or allow you to share my exile. Carry out everything as intended. This is my second visit to the

Franconia Notch, while the others are viewing its sublime grandeur for the first time. From that fact, you find that I shall not be deprived of as much as any of you would be in the same situation. You may go upon the day's pleasure with no anxiety on my account; meet in my room afterwards, and relate the incidents. That is all I ask."

"If you think best, I know we shall all agree, yet, I must say it looks the height of selfishness to leave you disabled,

and alone all day," answered Flora.

"Do not worry about me," said Elva. If I can get to the parlor, I will spend my days of probation to good advantage, and shall not be lonesome. I can feast my soul in reading, and in a few days I shall be able to practise upon the piano. Then there is a large neglected correspondence to remedy. And really, she added, in a merry tone, "I must get there some way, even if I avail myself of assistance from that

young Hercules."

The description of Elva Darling's personal appearance which Harry Morriton had given his brother, did not do justice to her charms. Although the fairest of blondes she was bright and vivacious; an appreciative listener, a brilliant conversationalist, and excellent at repartee. She was keen, impulsive and as quick as Harry to detect the humorous. The possession of like qualities in both had caused the clash of words at the first encounter. She was petite, and extremely sensitive about it.

A few days later, Harry, who had gained the good-will of all the inmates of the house, inquired how the "Little

Darling" was.

"She is steadily improving," answered the girl whom he had questioned; "but I found her this morning lamenting that she could not get down to the parlor where she might be with the others."

"Say that I'll carry her down, if she likes," volunteered Harry, wondering if she would receive the offered services.

The messenger departed on her errand ,and soon

returned with the answer that Miss Darling would be de-

lighted to avail herself of the great kindness.

"Whew!" whistled Harry to himself; "the tables are turned, and I am a friend in need!" He carried her easily, and carefully to the designated room; deposited her in the most comfortable chair to be found, pushed a foot-rest into position, gently raised the injured foot, and placed it upon it, as unconsciously as though it was simply a matter of every-day occurrence. "There, my Little Maid, are you all right now?" he asked after pulling a small table close to her right hand.

"Yes! Hercules, I am!" answered Elva. "I am very comfortable, and thank you ever so much for your assistance. I will give you an excellent recommendation as a nurse, should you desire it, any time. I anticipate a delightful morning with my books which Dolly will bring."

"Well, I am glad; though I always knew it did not take as much to make a girl happy as it did a boy. But I told you, at the first, I was in practice, if you remember," laughingly remarked Harry. "By the by, I will tell you about it sometime, or get some one else to do it. Couldn't you let those books rest this morning and do a little kindness for me, in the way of amusing Hervey, old chap?" he asked abruptly.

"O, yes!" she answered, "what do you require?"

"You see a party of us are going to climb a mountain, and explore a wonderful cave. I am hesitating on account of leaving my charge so long alone. If left to himself he might fall into one of his fits of mooning over the impossibilities. We might call it a case of reciprocity. You entertain the old chap for me in lieu of my services. Is it an agreement?"

"Yes!" readily assented Elva. "I shall be pleased to render you any assistance within my power. Bring in your patriarch or antediluvian and I will begin my amusement at once. Who knows but that we may have similar ideas!"

"Patriarch!" repeated Harry in an undertone, as he left

the room, and burst into his brother's presence, and threw himself upon a lounge where he rolled in paroxysms of laughter.

"What is the matter?" asked Hervey in surprise.

"I never had so much fun in all my life!" answered Harry, after the lapse of several moments spent in trying to articulate distinctly. "I wouldn't have missed this trip with you for anything. Figuratively speaking, I've seen the most literal wonder of the centuries. I'll not astonish you any more just now, old chapie, but come to the point, as Aunt Lida says. I offered to bring the 'Little Darling' down stairs, and she most graciously allowed me the privilege of depositing her ladyship in the parlor. Her friends are going upon the mountain expedition, which I propose joining, and I thought you two might amuse each other, during my absence, as neither can join the party. On the spur of the moment I asked her permission to introduce you, to which she most graciously assented. So allow me, my dear boy."

Harry conducted Hervey to the parlor, advanced to the lady's side and presented him in the following manner. "Miss Darling, allow me to present to you Mr. Morriton

my eldest brother."

She acknowledged the introduction with extended hand, which Hervey cordially grasped. A look of amazement was depicted upon her countenance, which she could not succeed in banishing, much to Harry's gratification. "I do not understand," she ventured to remark, "my young friend, here, told me you were a 'Mr. Vaughan,' and furthermore, asked if I would like to meet an old chap, and—"

"That's so!" interrupted Harry; "and if you don't find him the oldest man of his years, after a few hours acquaintance, why then, I will acknowledge myself a fraud, which I will wager that I shall never be called upon to do. His name is also Vaughan; I usually call him by his first two

names, and he is the eldest of the Morriton progeny."

"Harry's skilful explanation gave them both a better

understanding, while at the same time it cleared away the ambiguity of the previous information. He felt that he need have no uneasiness concerning either, and remarked in parting, "I say, old chapie, you might unearth some extinct root from the debris of the past, and hold it up for inspection, couldn't you? Or, perhaps the Little Maid might discover for your entertainment, the 'Lost Chord!' I understand that the field is still open for explorers, though it seems as hard to discover as the North Pole! You know the old motto about perseverance."

The newly-found friends were amused at Harry's parting suggestion, and smiled at the ingeniousness of his advice.

"Miss Darling, you must excuse my brother's exaggerations," said Hervey; "when you know him better you will not mind him in the least. He is the youngest, and has always been the pet of the family, in fact, I knew but very little of his true worth till our sojourn here, among the mountains, having been away from home so much while completing my studies. He is one of the noblest young men of the present day. Underneath his vein of humor you will find sterling qualities, but rarely seen. Nothing escapes his eagle eye of observation, while he is constantly thinking of benefiting others to the exclusion of self. inherits this most estimable trait of character from mother, though he is more like father than any of us. will perform the greatest deeds of kindness, and if you hesitate about accepting them, he makes it appear as though you were really granting him a favor."

"So I perceive," remarked Elva. "I am just beginning to understand him; your description of his real motives, and true character clears away many inexplicable things. He don't wish any thanks for his generosity, or praise for services. He has entirely mislead me, though I have prided myself upon my discernment of character among those under my instruction. I was expressing my gratitude to him for his kindness, when he interrupted by asking if I would amuse an 'old chap' for him. I assented, and expected to see some old veteran, or an aged philosopher."

"Again, I see his wisdom in misleading you to spare my sensitiveness, and to prevent my being 'molly-coddled,' as he calls it; while I might not have acceded to the proposition, had I known his intention. Though I am very happy in making your acquaintance, and we will forget the lack of conventionality."

"Thanks, Mr. Morriton, the pleasure is mutual," said Miss Darling. "But though I am for a time compelled to be a prisoner in the house, I would not deprive you of any pleasure by asking you to share the enforced seclusion of a

semi-invalid."

"It is no privation I can most earnestly assure you;" answered Hervey. "I am of necessity obliged to refrain from much. I am here to recruit an overworked system. I have been cautioned against fatigue, and am careful in carrying out the physician's commands, in hopes of a full restoration in time. It was very hard for me to lay aside my plans, though I assented willingly; but I found it much harder than I expected, when I complied, and realize that I might have fainted by the wayside, had it not been for Harry's encouragement. We take little outings together, and I find myself steadily improving. Mountain-climbing is a little too perilous for me to attempt, at present; so you find you deprive me of nothing, but in reality, bestow a blessing upon the lonely hours of my brother's absence."

The mutual misgivings were all banished upon the basis of a friendly understanding. Harry's good qualities formed the theme of conversation for some time, and the hours

were passing very pleasantly away.

"What a treasure Harry must be to you all!" exclaimed Elva.

"Yes! I sometimes think he possesses magical powers, in gaining whatever he wishes!" responded Hervey. If I do not afflict you with too much nepotism, I would like to relate the latest sacrifice he is about to make for me."

On being assured that he would not, he continued: "I am obliged to rest a whole year, and Harry proposes to

share the vacation with me. Just think what it means to him; a whole year right in the midst of his studies; you notice he is specially adapted to the study of law, and will make one of the most eminent jurists of the age, we hope. He excels, or leads, rather, in everything he undertakes; he holds first rank both in scholarship and in sports. By some forensic eloquence, I know not what, he has gained permission from home to do so. When I expostulated with him he tried all kinds of arguments, which of course, I could not prove to be worthless. He argued, that he might need a rest sometime himself, and there was no time so convenient as the present. Then it would allow one of his classmates to win the prize for scholarship, which he desired him to receive. He really advanced so many reasons for his proposition that I begun, almost to think I was bestowing a desirable blessing upon him, in allowing him to be with me. Though on grave reflection I knew it must be otherwise."

"Such forethought is truly most remarkable!" remarked Elva. "I have called him Hercules, from his great strength, but find him also a Plato, and a Solon. I think such a precocious youth will not suffer by a rest. He will never rust out."

"Just what he suggested to me," said Hervey; "when he complained of the poverty of his ideas."

A smile of amusement crept over the countenance of each as they knew it would be an utter impossibility for such an event to occur, while Harry retained his faculties.

Having exhausted the topic of brotherly love, they turned to other subjects, and found by comparison, that each held similar ideas on many points. So swiftly flew the happy hours away, that luncheon time arrived to their amazement. "Can it be possible that the morning has flown?" asked Hervey in surprise.

"So it appears!" answered Elva in a tone of incredulity;

"and I must thank you for a most enjoyable time."

"Truly we have verified Harry's idea of reciprocity,"

said Hervey; as he rose to depart he asked, "Will you grant

me the privilege of a short call later on?"

"Certainly, Mr. Morriton, with the greatest pleasure!" responded Elva; adding in her most charming manner, "my part of the contract was to amuse you till your brother's return."

Hervey Morriton left the presence of Elva Darling with a sense of intense gratification. Never had time passed so enjoyably away since he had left his beloved books. It must be, he thought "because I have found a kindred

spirit."

After finishing luncheon he took a short walk through the fields, along the river's bank. His mind dwelt upon the morning's conversation. He was learning a new lesson; one never found in books, only in the heart. It was the greatest lesson ever given to mankind by the divine Teacher; that of doing good to others. "What can I do for one shut in from these beauties?" he queried. Quick as a flash came the answer, "gather the beautiful wild flowers as a trophy of your good-will."

He selected the fairest of the little messengers of peace; they were only the tiny asters, immortelles, and golden-rod; small in value, yet priceless in breathing the fragrance of kindness. Returning to the house, he carried the flowers with a choice bit of dewy moss to his room, and arranged them

most artistically in a pretty little willow basket.

He entered the parlor, carrying the flowers, bowed to its fair occupant, and said, with a courtly air:

"A floral tribute kindly share,
That gives a breath of woodland air."

"O, how sweet!" exclaimd Elva, as she took the basket and placed it upon the table. "Thank you ever so kindly for your remembrance; it seems as though I was out among the flowers again, when I view their little faces. They are my friends and appeal to my sympathies, with their silent

language which I think I interpret. Again, I thank you, as nothing could have given me greater pleasure in the present condition. Sometimes, I have come to grief on account of my friendship; this mishap is attributable to it. I had purposely loitered behind the party to gather some rare specimens of a new flower; I had wandered quite a distance away; and, having gathered all I could see turned to retrace my steps, when I beheld confronting me, some huge beast with horns, from which I fled in terror. The flowers were scattered I know not where, in my fight, and the fancied beast of pray returned to her meal of juicy herbage, while I waited for assistance, which Harry so ably rendered."

"I am exceedingly sorry for you, Miss Darling, and perhaps some day I may find the coveted blossoms for you,"

said Hervey consolingly.

Interesting topics presented themselves, and the hours were spent in pleasing converse. Each related incidents connected with their chosen vocation. Hervey Morriton found that in thinking and caring for others, he lost sight of self, and was benefited by it. Also, that the long, dreary days were growing shorter and brighter. Strange to say, he no longer dreaded their dawn, but hailed their approach with anticipated delight. "What good fairy, I wonder, has taken compassion upon me, by passing her magic wand over my heart, and brightening all my life?" he asked of himself, as he sat listening to the sweet voice of his entertaining companion.

So short seemed the time to them, that they supposed it might easily be counted by a few brief moments, when the exploring party burst into the room with exuberant spirits unconscious of the presence of Hervey Morriton, exclaiming, "We've had a lovely time; we lunched at the summit of the peak and sipped nectar from the spring near by, out of dainty little cups fashioned by Harry Morriton. O, Elva! he's the jolliest boy living for an outing! He made us all Alpine staffs to climb with, and helped us over the

most dangerous places. He is a very necessary man to have around. O, what an exquisite little basket of wild flowers!" cried one. "What knight of the forest has brought you his treasures? Do tell us!" she pleaded impatiently.

Harry had followed the party unperceived, into the room, making signs to his brother to keep silent in regard to his presence by a series of winks. Thinking he might relieve Miss Darling's embarrassment in giving an answer, he drew the attention of the company to himself by breaking into a hearty laugh.

Flora Morey turned upon him immediately and informed him in a spirit of retaliation, that "listeners never hear any

good of themselves!"

"Yes, they do!" retorted Harry; "they hear enough to lower their self-esteem, which is beneficial. Now, young ladies, allow me to make you acquainted with Professor Morriton, my eldest brother." The girls acknowledged the introduction, seeing that the tables had been turned upon their champion.

"And, now, my Little Maid, how have you and the old chap enjoyed yourselves? Have you followed out my suggestions, or chosen your own source of amusement, during

my absence?"

We have been discussing the virtues of a modern Solon, which we found very interesting," answered Miss Darling.

"You went to the past ages, I see, and delved among the Grecian myths!" said Harry. "I wonder if you could find, among its old heroes, and gods, the line which separates the true history from the mythological!" Without expecting an answer he turned to Miss Darling and said, "Your coachman awaits your orders."

Catching his spirit, she replied, "Tell him I will spend the evening with my friends, and that he may call for me later."

Amusing smiles flitted across the faces of the happy party, at these sallies of wit, as they separated to make themselves presentable for the late dinner. They promised to meet Elva afterwards and devote the evening to music, in honor of her appearance.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FAIRY WITH MAGIC WAND.

The beautiful summer days were drawing to a close. The rich golden tints of autumn had already decked the foliage with a gorgeous splendor. The Morritons still lingered among the late visitors, while Miss Darling was yet suffering from the effects of the accident. Four weeks had passed, and she was only able to rest the injured foot upon the floor, without bearing any weight.

Her friends had reluctantly left to pursue the intended trip to the Maine coast, and were now occupied with their

respective duties.

"Have a good time, and do not let my misfortune mar your pleasure for an instant; the physician thinks I shall fully recover in a few more weeks, and 'what cannot be cured must be endured, "she said to them in cheery tones,

at the parting.

Elva Darling was the eldest of a large family of children. Her father was a hard-working mechanic. He owned a small home in a New England village, and made with his prudent wife, a severe struggle to educate his children. He had never been successful in carrying on business for himself, and was at present serving as foreman in a large establishment where he was much respected.

"Mother," he often said to his wife, "we will leave our little ones a good education, which no one can take away from them. It is the only legacy which we can leave, and we will do our best for them." And they had nobly kept

the promise through all the changing years.

An aunt of Mr. Darling's for whom Elva was named, at her decease, a few years previous, had left a legacy for the education of the children. "Use this as you please, Eben, after setting aside one-half to my dear namesake, Elva; let her complete the musical education which you

have begun. Give her the best there is to be found, and you will be no loser by it. If there is not sufficient in the half, call upon my lawyers, and they will advance from the

portion set aside for her, if she ever marries."

These were the conditions of the will, with a caution about making known the marriage settlement. This bequest had been received with the greatest blessings, and all the instructions had been most faithfully carried out. It enabled the loving parents to fulfil their fondest wishes in regard to their children.

The means of an education being furnished, Mr. Darling found himself able to clear the mortgage from the old homestead, and place a small insurance on his life, payable to

him in his declining years.

Elva was placed under the tuition of the best instructors in vocal and instrumental music. She became proficient in her favorite art. She desired that she might go to Germany and extend her education, and through Aunt Elva's means the wish had been gratified. She spent two years of diligent study both in music and German, and returned a musical wonder, not only to her parents, but also to friends. For the past year she had ably filled a most responsible position as instructor of music in a select seminary for young ladies. She was thorough and patient with her pupils and won their hearts by her winning ways. She was in hopes to be present at the opening session of the seminary which took place the latter part of September; but as time sped on, she saw that it was impossible.

Though eager to be engaged with her work, Elva found the time did not drag upon her hands; she knew that her enjoyment was due, in a measure, to the Morritons. Harry still constituted himself as her "coachman," and carried her to and fro from the parlor, in spite of her demures, at

the lengthened need of service.

The daily visits of Hervey were looked forward to with great pleasure by both; yet, neither knew how much depended upon the other, to make the pleasing anticipation a happy realization.

Hervey passed nearly all his time in the presence of the afflicted maiden. They found many interesting topics Both minds were well stored with facts of conversation. and historical events; they had visited the same places upon the Continent, and experienced much joy in recalling the beauties and wonders of the different places and all the vast attractions of a past age. A new glow gilded each scene, as memory presented it to their vision.

The good fairy was using her magic wand over Hervey's cares, and chasing them all away; but he did not recognize her. He seemed satisfied with her assistance, without investigating the method, a thing contrary to his usual custom. He only realized that a sweet sense of contentment rested upon him, and in some strange, pleasing way, his annoying desires had taken flight. He thought his state of mind was largely attributable to his renewed state of health.

Harry, with his quick perception, saw the state of affairs and was greatly amused at their expense. "What I feared has taken place, in spite of me!" he said to himself. see I am no match for Cupid's darts, so I will let the 'turtle doves' alone. It is a temptation, though, to have a little fun with them; but, I'll wait till the 'Little Darling' is around, and able to defend herself."

"Hervey!" shouted Harry, as he entered the room on his return from a ramble, don't you wish little Unie could get a glimpse of these grand old mountains? How her mild eyes would glisten with admiration! I suppose you have told the Little Maid every item concerning her, during some

of your many conversations."

"I plead guilty to the omission," answered Hervey. had not reached the absent ones; there were so many interesting items that the time has passed away without my knowledge."

"A grave oversight!" replied Harry humorously; "and, when I had depended on you, to make clear my allusion to the practice of carrying ladies around! Let me inform you that twenty-four hours make a day as of old; and, what you two can find to talk about so much, without gossip concerning your fellow-creatures is utterly beyond my

comprehension."

A look of inquiry was visible upon the countenances of the catechised pair, and each wondered what form of interrogation Harry's next query would take, when he interrupted their surmises, by jumping up and exclaiming, "Halloo, there comes the coach! I'll run out and see if there is any one I know among the arrivals; see you later, and report."

Silence followed his departure; Elva and Hervey were each asking of themselves if Harry's pertinent remarks were well founded. They searched to see if it were true that they were absorbed in each other, to the exclusion of all others. Both were finding the same result, judging from

their satisfied looks.

Elva found that a deep sense of enjoyment had crept into her life, which she had never experienced before. may be," she argued, "that because I am disabled, I have seized upon the first opportunity which presented itself, to beguile away the weary time, that must elapse before I am restored to my normal state. She searched very carefully to see if she had been exacting or over-anxious for Mr. Morriton's company. She found that nearly all her thoughts were centered upon him. She was happy when conversing with him on some favorite subject; happy in following his lead through abstruse research; happy in thought of him during absence; happy in anticipating his return; in fact, always happy since she had known him, even in affliction. In her thorough search she could find no way wherein she had been at fault. "Harry brought him to me for amusement, and I have only fulfilled his request," she said to her inquiring heart, as if to excuse her great interest. "I do hope," she continued, "he does not think me a petted child who must be indulged in absurd fancies, or amused at any expense, even against his own inclinations. Etiquette forbids that I should seek an answer to such fancies, and I will wait for him to break his meditative mood; unless he gets too deep in one of those mooning fits, against which Harry warned me. I do wish, just at present, I possessed a little of his tact, to change the subject from its present drift."

Hervey Morriton was undergoing a more rigid investigation than his companion. He knew that the hours spent in Elva Darling's presence were the happiest in all his life. The fascination was strengthened with every meeting, and was more absorbing than his beloved books. The truth was dawning upon him; "I have met one who is greater than a kindred spirit; one, with whom I can exchange thoughts and ideas. I have found one who can assist me in the fields of science, and encourage with her sympathetic aid through all its devious ways. Already her gentle influence has crept upon me unawares, and I am studying her wishes, and find myself a gainer, thereby, instead of a loser," he confided to himself. "In truth, I have found the fairy with magic wand. She has been a trusty guide in my case, and I hope will play none of her wild pranks upon me. I will still follow the fascinating path which she points out, and learn her mission. Where will she lead, I wonder?" He was apparently lost in the contemplation of some engrossing subject, when his attention was arrested by a deep-drawn sigh from Elva which recalled the wandering senses from fancy's realms to the present surroundings.

Elva saw that he had fallen into one of his dreamy moods, from which she must arouse him. She broke the silence, by saying, "I think Harry must have found a friend, among

the arrivals, to prevent his return, don't you?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Hervey. The question brought them to the commonplace things of life, and banished the perilous flights of the imagination. "He will probably return ere long, with a budget of news which will astonish us."

"That will be nothing out of the ordinary," remarked Elva. "I am afraid," she continued, pleased that the old method of conversation had been resumed, "that I shall be deprived of the pleasure of attending the opera, during the coming season; certainly if this offending member does not mend itself faster than it has been doing of late. Though I am grateful for the little improvement."

"We will hope for the best; perhaps if that pleasure is denied, you may have a greater one given in its place," said Hervey, consolingly, bestowing upon her a look of tender compassion, which comforted the longing heart.

They discussed the operas, the prima-donnas, and the grand old masters. The moments glided swittly by, and

they no longer noted Harry's absence.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE.

HARRY rushed out to the piazza, and stood watching the passengers alight from the coach. All at once he made a spring down the steps, exclaiming, "Great Scott! what has happened to bring those two here! Halloo, Doc! How are you, old boy?" he cried grasping his brother by the hand. "And Aunt Lida, how are you?" he asked, giving her a resounding kiss in presence of them all. "By the shades of my unknown ancestors! Who would have thought of seeing you two here? Come in, and tell me by what miracle you have invaded our mountain retreat?" He conducted them inside, and made the necessary arrangements for rooms. "I suppose you are tired, dusty, and hungry," he added by way of inquiry.

On being assured to the contrary, he led them into a small sitting-room, to learn if possible, the cause of this

remarkable visit.

"How is Hervey?" they asked. "Where is he? And when can we see him?"

"O, he's all right!" he answered complaisantly. "That is, he is gaining and don't complain of being so tired. At present he is most agreeably engaged, and I have just left him to see if there were any I knew among the passengers. Won't he be surprised when he finds out! But do tell me all about the dear ones at home. I know of course that they are at Rosevale for the summer. But what brings you two here is utterly beyond the power of my imagination!"

"Father and mother are in their usual health," replied Doctor Herbert; "and happy in learning of Hervey's

improvement."

"Violet is as restless, and busy as ever; she is investigating a new science, or rather an old religion, under a new name. A mystical order, I believe, or some other mystery."

responded Aunt Lida. "Unie is as patient and amiable as ever. She is greatly amused with your letters, and says it seems as though she could see the very places you describe so accurately."

"Poor little pet!" said Harry, "I must write her soon;

how much she loses of life!"

"What did you mean, Harry, by the threatened evil?"

inquired Aunt Lida.

"Just what I wrote!" replied Harry; "but it came in spite of my precautions. Why, Doc, he's found an elixir of life not known in the whole materia medica, which eclipses all the discoveries of the ages; that of love. But it is doing him a world of good, making him forget self, and his fascinating books. I, for one, am glad of it, though she's not my style, you know. You will be astonished when you see him, so prepare yourselves for a miraculous change."

With these preliminary remarks, Harry conducted them to the parlor. "Miss Darling," said he, "permit me to make you acquainted with Doctor Herbert, the most reliable physician of the age, and Aunt Lida, the best aunt in

the 'wide, wide world.'"

She acknowledged the introduction, with extended hand, asking them to excuse her from rising on account of a lame foot.

Hervey grasped his brother's hand with expressive joy, and kissed Aunt Lida upon both cheeks with a royal welcome. "How glad I am to see you both! We were wondering what had become of Harry and knew it was some rich treat that he had in store, but never expected this. But, excuse me, one moment; Harry's introductions are often ambiguous, and I find I must make this clear to you, Miss Darling. Doctor Herbert and Aunt Lida are both members of the Morriton family. I think, now, there can be no misunderstanding."

"I gathered as much from the demonstrations;" replied Elva. And, would express my best wishes to you, for the

arrival of your relatives."

"Thank you!" said Hervey. "We are all delighted,

and will brighten the hours for you."

Aunt Lida at once constituted herself as Elva's nurse and champion. "I don't wonder Hervey fell in love with the 'Little Darling;' I think we all have, except Harry. She looks so much like Unie we cannot help it. I don't believe she has been treated properly, here in the country where everything is so behind times. I'll ask Herbert, and see what he advises, he surely will know if he hasn't practised much. Six weeks! and not able to walk yet, from a sprained ankle. Why the idea is preposterous!" she thought.

The same evening after Elva had withdrawn to her room, Aunt Lida consulted Doctor Herbert about the case, and receiving some valuable suggestions, she went to Elva's

door and knocked for admission.

Receiving a summons to enter, she did so, saying, "I thought I would just look in, my dear, and see you settled for the night. How is the foot? What do you have done for it, before retiring?" she inquired, in a quick, nervous manner.

"It is aching very much to-night," answered Elva; "but it always does, when the bandages are removed, and I am getting accustomed to it, thank you. Sometimes it keeps me awake a greater part of the night, Miss Morriton."

"You poor, neglected child!" cried Aunt Lida. "We will put an end to that thing, and make you comfortable for one night, at least. I thought as much," she mur-

mured to herself.

Stepping to the bell she gave it a vigorous pull, which was immediately answered by an attendant. "Bring me a foot tub, plenty of hot water, and a little alcohol, if you have it, please," she ordered. The articles were soon placed at her disposal, when she proposed to give the foot and ankle a good bath in the hot water, a gentle rubbing with alcohol, and then bandage it for the night.

After successfully carrying out these operations, she asked

solicitously, "How do you feel now, my dear?"

"Ever so much better, thank you," replied Elva. "How shall I express my gratitude, for such great kindness to me a perfect stranger!" she asked, and gave vent to her feel-

ings in a flood of tears.

"It is unnecessary nonsense; my creed teaches me to minister unto the sick; and I am never so happy as when fussing over some one. I have no girls of my own, therefore, I am obliged to fuss over those belonging to other people. So get into bed, and I will read to you, as I often do for Unie. Have they told you about her?" she asked turning her mind into another channel.

"Only that she is the sister whom Harry carries around

sometimes," answered Elva.

"She is our pet invalid," quietly informed Aunt Lida. "That is, she is so frail, she is not able to be with us very much, but compelled to stay in her room nearly all the time. She has been an invalid since she was four years of age. You remind me very much of her, with your hair and eyes; she is also small as you are. We all worship her, and when Harry is at home he carries her easily around both in doors and out. And, now, if you would like me to imagine I have her with me, just call me Aunt Lida."

"I will, Aunt Lida!" readily agreed Elva. "I should be highly entertained in hearing you read, if not asking too

much."

Without replying to these remarks, Aunt Lida continued, "I fortunately have the next room to yours, and I notice there is a door connecting the two; now, if you have no objection I will remove the bolt, so that I may hear you, if you need any assistance during the night. Don't hesitate to speak if you should. I am accustomed to run in to Unie, so shall not mind it, in the least. I will bring in one of Marietta Holly's interesting books, Unie's favorite."

And Aunt Lida returned with the book bearing the title, "My Wayward Pardner," and selected the chapter containing an account of the summer boarders. She read in soft,

low, dreamy tones of Samantha's meditations, and trials with Josiah, and soon found from the regular breathing, that her patient had gone to the realms of dreamland, even before she had finished the chapter. Yet, she read on in the same sweet monotone to the end, lest the sleeper might miss the accompaniment to her light slumbers. Satisfied, at length, that she was safely sheltered in the arms of Morpheus, she walked gently to the door, fastened it, and crossed to her own room, with the step of one that was acquainted with the sick-room.

It is needless, almost, to state that Elva rested quietly through the night, and awoke the next morning greatly refreshed. Aunt Lida repeated the same course every evening and Elva improved greatly under the new regime.

"How would you like a ride to-day, my dear?" asked

Aunt Lida, one morning.

"O, ever so much, if you thought it would not hurt me!"

answered Elva with glowing eyes.

"Hurt you!" she repeated, "Of course it will not! It is the greatest wonder that you have not injured your constitution, staying housed up, for six long weeks. We have a fine programme arranged, and there is no reason why you should not make one of us. We can place a hassock under your baby-foot, making you as comfortable as though you were in that very chair. We propose to ride as far as we can to the Flume; you can sit and rest in the carriage while the others explore the wilds, till they return; then we drive to the Profile House, take a good rest, and get dinner, after which we resume our drive forward to Echo Lake then return home. Has the outing sufficient attraction for you to make the attempt?"

"Indeed it has!" replied Elva, enthusiastically. "I

wish I were well, though," she added.

"If you were, you would not be here!" rebukingly retorted Aunt Lida. "Be content with present blessings, not dissatisfied."

"That is true, Aunt Lida; I will endeavor to make the

most of this day's freedom, in being just as happy as possible. It shall be a 'Red Letter' day to me, celebrating my emancipation from illness!" she said with meekness. "I know it is wrong for me to complain, when I have a coachman ever ready for my commands."

"You possess the right material. Always think of some worse off than yourself, and you can get reconciled to nearly

everything."

The original plan was carried out as arranged, affording great pleasure to all. It was but the beginning of many similar days' enjoyment to Elva, during Aunt Lida's stay.

Shortly afterwards it lay in her power to contribute to her benefactor's happiness. It was a rainy day; one of those rains in which the very skies seemed to open and empty themselves of all their stores. She was playing an amusing game of chess with Hervey; Aunt Lida was sitting near by, interested alike, in a book and the players. Though a difficult operation, she managed it admirably, judging from the satisfied expression which spread over her features.

"Little Maid," said Harry, entering the room, "what can we do to amuse ourselves the rest of the day? We have played ninepins and billiards till I am tired of the sound of the balls; it pours so, there is no show out of doors; I am at my wits' end, and have come to you for a suggestion."

"I don't know of anything unless I give you a little music, which I should be pleased to furnish if you will kindly push my chair to the piano," said Elva. Harry complied with the request, and she seated herself at the fine instrument. "Now, what would you like?" she asked, animatedly.

"Anything you please!" answered Harry. "Beggars

should not be choosers!""

Elva ran her fingers over the keys, as if caressing a familiar object from which she had been separated; then, took up one of Mendelssohn's beautiful "Songs without Words." From this, she passed to selections from Schubert, Strauss,

and Wagner. Her listeners saw that a professional hand was striking the keys, and were enraptured. Her audience had increased till nearly all the guests of the house were drawn to the vicinity of the sweet sounds. "Is that sufficient, or shall I keep on?" she asked of Harry, standing near by.

"Yes, do if you are not tired. My, but wouldn't my sister Violet like to find you for a musicale! You beat Paderewski himself!" said Harry rapturously. "But could you leave the classics and give us a little of the ordinary, such as waltzes, polkas, and such like? Something with

a jingle?"

"Certainly, if you like; I am not the least mite wearied, as I am accustomed to play five and six hours often, at a

time," she answered, with a smile.

Aunt Lida quietly placed a hassock under the foot, and she kept on till the gong was sounded for dinner, promising to play again for them in the evening.

CHAPTER IX.

AUNT LIDA'S INVITATION.

The evening in which Elva Darling fulfilled her promise to Harry was a memorable one to all assembled at the house. Outside it was dark and dreary; the wind swept by in moaning gusts; the rain beat piteously against the window panes; the mountain brook rushed and roared with the thunder of a cataract, on its way to the mighty river overflowing its banks. The flowers dropped their tiny heads upon a watery couch. The grand old giants of the forest mingled their tears in unison with the clouds. The very elements seemed united in a vast deluge.

Inside, the scene presented a great contrast. There was warmth, and sunshine; a large fire from an open grate sent its genial rays around. Strains of melody issued from

happy voices, filling all with exquisite pleasure.

On Harry's return to the obliging pianist, he deposited an armful of books upon the floor, exclaiming as he did so, "There Little Maid, if you are willing, we'll serenade the natives. I wondered what Hervey was bringing all those books for, and, now, I see. I slipped the College Songs in for myself, you know," he ran breathlessly on, "Hervey and the Doctor are fine singers, if you can get them started."

Some one asked, "Doesn't Miss Darling sing?"

"A little," she modestly replied.

Cries of "song! song! song, please!" echoed from all quarters, till she was obliged to accede to their numerous demands. She sang Tennyson's "Song of the Brook," for the first selection. It was received with many thanks, amid which she struck the opening bars of "Il Trovatore," and sang that pathetic song, "Ah, I have Sighed for Rest." A hush fell upon the company at its close, then bursts of applause rang from all.

"A little!" repeated Harry. "A nightingale I would

have called you, had I only known it!"

"Miss Darling, you must be weary after your efforts," said Hervey. "Will you allow Herbert to take your place?

We must not tax you too much."

"O no, please, Mr. Morriton!" said Elva. "I am enjoying it very much, and not weary in the least. I must hear you and the Doctor sing, and will play your accompaniments, and then, there are Harry's college songs, which we must not overlook."

Song after song rang out in rich cadences upon the mountain air. Solos, duetts, trios, and quartettes so finely rendered that even the birds might pause to catch the sweet notes. The chorus of college songs awoke the echoes of the glens. At their close a vote of thanks was extended to Miss Darling, which she most graciously accepted. "Three cheers and a tiger," cried Harry not willing to be outdone by any. They were given, till the very rafters shook with the lusty shouts.

The party separated at ten o'clock, remarking in their exit, "The best time I ever had!" "The best rainy day I ever saw!" "I wish it might rain more often!" "Let's invite our neighbors in next time!" "The stage has not

taken all the stars!"

Every evening afterwards, during the remainder of their stay the visitors were entertained with music by the "Mountain Nightingale;" a name which they had given Elva as

a mark of their appreciation of her talents.

Doctor Herbert and Aunt Lida had been with the boys nearly two weeks, and were talking of returning to Rosevale. They saw that Hervey was gaining wonderfully. His old physician knew that his mind must be free from anxiety, and hoped by sending Harry with him, he could accomplish it. What he had failed to do, Elva, with her sweet winning ways, had most unconsciously done. She was utterly ignorant of the great amount of good which she had so artlessly bestowed; and, none were so conscious of this as Hervey himself.

Elva had improved greatly under Aunt Lida's ministra-

tions; that they had been most efficient was shown by the increasing strength of the injured foot. The swelling was diminishing, while she was enabled to bear her weight moderately upon it a little each day. But she shrank with apprehension, when she heard the Morritons speak of departing. She was even selfish enough to wish that they might prolong their stay till she was ready to depart; and felt she would be in a few more weeks, if Aunt Lida could be with her.

"Herbert," said the ever-anxious Aunt, one afternoon, as they had gathered for a short time with Elva, "don't you think we had better be drawing our visit to an end? We told Unie we would remain only a week, while we have nearly doubled the time. She must think we have found

something wonderful to keep us so long."

"Well, I should like to know if you haven't?" inquired Harry; what more do you want when you have found a mountain nymph, and a nightingale! 'Some people want the earth,' as the boys say. You ought to be satisfied. I only hope Hervey and I will find such company all the time we are away."

Harry's remarks caused a smile to run over all the faces except Elva's; she had comprehended the meaning and

dropped her eyes in modest confusion.

Hervey came to the rescue, noticing her embarrassment: "Yes, Aunt Lida, I am afraid our pleasant days must soon terminate. The time has been so delightful here at the mountains, and I am feeling so much improved, I had not noticed its flight. Harry and I expect to visit the Adirondacks from here, and winter in California. But, I do not anticipate so much pleasure at any place as I have found here," he added contemplatively.

"I would like to take Elva with us to Rosevale, for awhile," said Aunt Lida to Herbert. "Unie would be so pleased to make her acquaintance, and I vouchsafe they will do each other a vast amount of good. You might stay, my dear, till you are sufficiently recovered to resume your duties.

Can't you, Miss Darling?" she asked, turning to the

astonished girl.

"Why, Aunt Lida, what do you mean?" questioned Elva, too surprised to trust her own senses. "Could I have understood correctly?" she asked herself; "Certainly I did!" she reassured her wavering mind. "But how shall I accept such unheard of kindness?" she queried, while she tried to arrange a satisfactory answer both to Aunt Lida, and her own craving heart.

Harry, with his natural impulsiveness, interrupted her misgivings by exclaiming, "The best thing under the sun! You've played the trump card at the right time, Auntie, and won the game!" He caught her in his arms and made a pirouette around the room, expressive of the exuberance

of his spirits.

"I should be pleased, Aunt Lida, to accept your lovely offer, but know it is trespassing too much on your kindness. I have been granted leave of absence as long is it is required, and think by Christmas I shall be able to resume work, in my normal state, owing to your great care of me. But, believe me, I am extremely grateful for the kind invitation. As soon as I am able to travel I will spend a few weeks with the dear ones at home. Mother has wished to send one of my sisters to stay with me, but I assured her I was in the best of hands; and I am improving so rapidly now, it is unnecessary."

"There are no 'buts' in the case," said Harry.

"We should be highly favored, Miss Darling, to have you accept our invitation, and will do all in our power to contribute to your happiness. In order for you to fully recover the use of your foot, you must give it more time than you have allowed. It was more than an ordinary case of strained muscles and ligaments. If you were a little nearer New York, I would like to have the advice of a celebrated physician concerning it," said Dr. Herbert.

"Do you fear any serious danger?" eagerly asked Elva, fearing that some new trouble might be known to the Doctor.

"O, no!" answered Dr. Herbert, with assurance. "I only know that you must give the foot the necessary time to recover, to prevent being lame for life. If you are patient it will come all right; but you must be exceedingly

careful," he added with a professional air.

"I will try;" responded Elva. "I would like very much to go with Aunt Lida, to your beautiful home on the Hudson, but feel assured you would all enjoy it better, sometime when I am well. I do not like to inconvenience any one, as I fear I might in my present condition." They noticed the look of sadness stealing over Elva's face when she stated her objections to accepting the invitation.

"Inconvenience!" repeated Harry; "what did I tell you about reciprocity, a few weeks ago? Have you forgotten it, I wonder! 'Inconvenience!'" he reiterated. "The absurd idea of you thinking such a thing possible, when you could give so much pleasure to the folks at home by your music. Violet would idolize and rave over you, and you could even help little Unie in forgetting her pains, with your sweet songs. 'Inconvenience any one—' having such a voice!"

"Why, Harry," said Elva animatedly, "if I could be of any use, I would be delighted to go! Do you think I could be, Aunt Lida?" she asked with a new interest.

"I know it!" quietly answered Aunt Lida. "What

Harry says is the absolute truth."

"Then, I most gratefully accept the invitation, and will stay till you are tired of me," said Elva, restored to her

customary light-hearted manner.

"That's a bargain, mind you, Little Maid, and we are the witnesses! Yet, there is another thing I would like you to do for me, in amusing Unie. You must describe all the places here, which you have seen that I have not sketched for her. I have been so busy of late, I have not had time to do any. I wish you would try and supply my delinquency."

"Sketches! "Sketches!" echoed Hervey and the Doctor.

Explain yourself, please, and inform us what muse you have

invoked to your aid, for such a task!"

"It is a little secret I shared with Unie and Aunt Lida," answered Harry. "I often sketch, or caricature anything interesting, and send it to Unie," he explained. "In fact, I am thinking strongly of sending my contributions to Puck and Judge, and add to my income. Would you advise it?"

"O Harry, won't you show some of them to us?" eagerly

inquired Elva.

"Sorry to refuse your request, but the best of all my endeavors are in Unie's possession; if you desire to see them, I know she will satisfy your curiosity, especially if you say I was willing," he calmly answered. She knew from his emphasis the subject of the caricatures, and felt assured they were of her fright over the cow.

This arrangement was satisfactory to all, and especially so to Hervey. He knew that Elva would be very happy with his sisters and parents, though he was reticent in

showing his pleasure.

"You will let me know how you stood the journey, Miss Darling, won't you?" he said at parting, when he grasped her hand in an affectionate clasp, and glanced tenderly into her eyes.

After the departure of Aunt Lida, Dr. Herbert, and Elva, it seemed very lonely to the boys. "Don't it seem lonesome here, without the 'Little Darling'?" Harry asked his brother,

a few days after their exit.

"Yes," replied Hervey, thinking he missed her more than his inquirer knew. "I am ready to leave for the Adirondacks any time."

"All right! we will start tomorrow, if the weather is

suitable," answered Harry.

They did so, carrying with them the memory of a glorious time.

CHAPTER X.

LITTLE UNIE.

VIOLET and Eunice Morriton, though twins, were totally unlike; they differed not only in character, but in temperament. Each was beautiful in her own distinctive style of gracefulness, while both were, in a measure, counterparts

of their parents.

Violet inherited the stronger constitution; a fine physique, and a symmetrical figure. She was naturally strong and reliable. A marked originality gave evidence of rare genius. A spirit of independence gave her the leadership among her associates, not from any undue officiousness which she exhibited, but from their own voluntary acknowledgment of the superiority of her attainments. She bore greater resemblance to the father than to the mother; from him she had taken the reflective habit, though she carried it to a greater extent than he did; that is, she would sacrifice her own happiness, rather than go contrary to a decision which she had formed after much consideration. She was neither cold nor exacting, but very attractive, and lovely in many ways.

Violet was beautiful with the rich coloring of a brunette. She resembled the mother in this respect, being what Mrs. Morriton had been in her youth. She had the same sweet expression of countenance; the same clear complexion; the same deep, brilliant, fascinating eyes, when in repose; but the struggling spirit within, often gave them a deeper brilliancy, and darker hue, which only increased their magnetic power, and intensified their owner's loveliness. A full, high forehead showed a fondness for language and music. The nose was Grecian, making the face as perfect in its contour as the classic heads carved so delicately upon the face of a cameo. The mouth, with its thin lips showed firmness and decision. Soft and abundant chestnut-brown

hair was her "crowning glory." It crept to the forehead in curling waves, making a rich frame for an exquisite

picture.

Eunice, or Unie as she was the more frequently called, was the opposite of her sister in nearly every way. She was one of the fairest of blondes; she possessed that clear white complexion, as of satin, while the soft pink of the blush rose suffused the cheeks. The eyes were the hue of the modest violet found in the valley shrinking away from the bustling crowd. The forehead was low, though full, showing noble traits of benevolence and veneration; and indicating, at the same time, great intellectual powers.

Golden hair adorned the well-formed head, and fell profusely in tiny ringlets upon the sloping shoulders. She was small in stature, and of slight figure, resembling the mother; from her she had inherited that kind sympathetic spirit, which enabled her to assist those in trouble. By nature she was frail and dependent. She lacked that strength of endurance with which her sister was so liberally supplied. As a slender vine clings to a stronger object for support to Unie clung to Violet for strength and shelter.

Unie possessed the faculties of ideality and wit in an extraordinary degree, which she often exercised for Harry's benefit. Indeed, they were kindred spirits, and each contributed to the other's enjoyment, often making happy hours in the long, weary days which had fallen upon the little sister's life. She held an intense love for art, and would have made an artist of no small merit, had she not

been prevented by physical debility.

From infancy, the difference between the sisters was noticeable. One was strong; the other weak; one run about, with the bounding steps of a vigorous child, making the home merry with her wild bursts of laughter; the other tripped with light footsteps along the sister's path, sending sending forth her little rills of mirth like the echo of a silver bell.

"Mother," said Violet one day in childhood, "why can't Unie play with me? She says she's tired."

"My child," answered the mother, "Unie is not so strong as you are. She is weak."

"Why ain't she? She is just as old as I am!" persisted

the reflective Violet.

"Because God made her weak, and you strong," said

the mother, trying if she could to satisfy her.

"Why did He do that? Why didn't He make her just like me, so we both could run and play and not get tired?"

asked the puzzled child.

The mother saw that the child had touched a theological point which was beyond her power of comprehension. She was silent a few moments, pondering what knowledge she could impart, that would satisfy the anxious little one sitting so patiently at her feet awaiting an answer.

"Violet," she said, "God made us all as He thought it would be best; some strong, and others weak; some large, others small; some rich, others poor; I think He wants the rich ones to help the poor, and the strong to take care

of the weak."

"I see, mother," answered the satisfied child. "I must take care of Unie, 'cause I'm stronger!" And, she bounded away, learning a new truth which remained with her, throughout life. She thus early became her sister's champion, and watched over her with unremitting zeal.

The bond of sympathy established in childhood strengthened with the growth of years. The shielded sister became a solace to the stronger, when the sorrows of life seemed to overwhelm her very soul. The deeds of kind-

ness were more than repaid a hundred fold.

Unie was an easy prey to all the diseases incident to child-hood. At the early age of four, she fell a victim to pneumonia; it prostrated her so greatly that it seemed as though the frail life must succumb in spite of its struggles. She lay like a broken lily; all hope had even fled, when she gradually rallied, and they knew that she would live. She never fully recovered her strength from the dreadful encounter. The lungs were weakened by the attack, and the greatest care was necessary to alleviate her weakness.

She was loved by all; from parents, brothers, sister, servants and friends, she received the most faithful service, and reciprocated from her vast treasury of love, often bestowing more than an equivalent. Her dearest love was given to her sister Violet, whose need she always perceived, even before it was expressed. Her life was like a sweet little poem so beautifully illustrated by the following lines:

"Little deeds of kindness, Little words of love, Make our earth an Eden Like the heaven above."

Truly, it was a taste of Eden to be in her presence.

Unie's education was but limited, on account of loss of health. No regular course was pursued. An intelligent comprehension imparted aknowledge of what came under her observation. The memory was retentive, enabling her to learn much that otherwise she might have lost. Only at times was it prudent to satisfy the thirst for knowledge. Instruction was conveyed through readings by the mother Aunt Lida, Violet and a companion who, also, combined the qualities of a governess. Most carefully was the utmost caution observed that nothing might tire the little enthusiast.

The talent of drawing which she possessed in a remarkable degree gave great pleasure, not only to herself, but to others of the family. She frequently illustrated with pencil any special scene which had amused her in a reading. It seemed as natural for her to draw as it was to speak.

Unie's rooms were among the finest in the Morriton Mansion. They opened upon the balcony overlooking the court and park. Every provision necessary for her comfort had been made. The suite contained three rooms, a parlor, boudoir and sleeping apartment; all were daintily furnished in blue, white and gold, in harmony with the tastes of the fair possessor

She spent nearly all the time in her own apartments, and "received her visitors in state," Harry said. She was contented and happy in possessing "the pearl of great price." She was in harmony with life; in consonance with the Father's will.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAIRIES' ABODE.

THE return of Doctor Herbert and Aunt Lida, accompanied by Miss Darling occasioned great surprise among the Morritons; they were cognizant of the philanthropic spirit which dominated the life of their relative, and had often assisted in acts of benevolence. But, she had never ventured before, to bring a protege home, and they questioned her wisdom, while they sought a reason for the

strange proceeding.

The carriage had been sent to the landing to meet them, in answer to a telegram from Herbert, who said nothing concerning a stranger; accordingly, they supposed the new guest to be some one whom their aunt had found upon the way home. As soon as the piazza was reached, Aunt Lida, intent upon command, rose with a bustling air, saying, Herbert, you run into the house and tell them all about Elva, while I go upstairs with her; here, Jimmie," she added, turning to the astonished gardener, who stood a short distance away, "you carry this young lady upstairs to the parlor; you can do it easier than the coachman, as you are in practice."

"Why, Aunt Lida!" expostulated Elva; "I can walk!

I am not very tired. I will go slowly!"

"Walk!" she repeated; "not if I have to carry you myself! I am truly glad you are improving so fast, as not to feel 'very tired' after a whole day's travel. I own, I am 'very tired.' And I am exceedingly glad, my young friend, I have you under my supervision a while longer."

Aunt Lida had relieved her mind while Jimmie was getting ready for the required service. "Miss Darling, let me give you into Mr. Knight's care," she said, by way of an introduction. "He carries Unie about, so you need

indulge no fear."

"There, Unie! I have brought you a real live doll to play with!" she exclaimed, as Jimmie deposited his bur-

den in a large easy chair.

"What do you mean, Auntie?" queried Unie. "I am so pleased to see you back; I have missed you so much! I am too old for dolls, but know I shall like whatever you have brought me. Let me see it, please." She rose from the couch where she had been lying at their entrance, and walked to the chair, in front of which Aunt Lida stood awaiting her surprise.

"There! what do you think of it?" she asked, stepping

to one side.

"Why it's Elva! O, you Little Darling, how glad I am to make your acquaintance!" She gave her a kiss of welcome, taking her at once into the fulness of her love.

"And you are little Unie!" said Elva. "I feel as though I had known you for a long time, they have told me so

much about you."

The heart of each maiden responded to the other, in the exuberance of their joy. The sympathetic chord of friendship was touched which vibrated through all their remaining lives.

"How did you recognize me so quickly?" asked Elva,

on being relieved of her wraps.

"From Aunt Lida's description in her letters, it was very

easy;" responded Unie.

"And from Harry's sketches, also, I presume!" added Elva, with an intelligent smile; "which he said you might show me some day, with his permission."

The days at Rosevale passed swiftly away, and Elva settled into a little niche which seemed to have been wait-

ing for her to fill.

Herbert had consulted with the celebrated physician who had recommended electric treatment, and the wearing of a boot with supports. He assured her it would be all right with time and patience. The prescribed course was commenced immediately, and she was greatly benefited,

though she could walk but very little without overtaxing the foot.

Elva soon gained the affections of the household. The parents wished they might keep her for their own, she was so helpful, and restful to Unie. Indeed, the resemblance to her was so striking, that Elva might easily be taken for the twin-sister instead of Violet.

Rosevale had received its name from the abundance of its roses, which blossomed profusely from early spring till the chilling frosts of autumn. It lay upon a slope reaching to the river's edge, and commanded a fine view of the ad-

jacent country.

In pleasant weather the family spent a greater portion of the time out of doors; either upon the piazza, or in the grounds. Unie and Elva reclined in hammocks, swung from the trees, watching the boats pass, to and fro, on the river, while Elva told of the foreign land she had visited, or sang a soothing lullaby to the weary one. One dreamy October afternoon, they were amusing themselves in this way, when Elva broke forth into that sweet little song, "Where do Fairies Dwell?" She had been describing a a journey which she had taken through Italy, while she was in Europe. Unie lay with closed eyes looking so weary during the recital that Elva thought a little music might prove a beneficial change. The low sweet tones of the silvery voice charmed the senses of the listening maiden into the realms of dreamland, as Elva supposed and she ceased singing.

"Go on, please, Elva, it is so sweet;" said Unie opening

her drowsy eyes.

Elva took up the beautiful strains again, and sang them over and over. The smile on Unie's face faded to a look of sweet content. The weariness had passed away under the ministrations of the spirit which was reigning for awhile untrammeled by physical weakness. Song after song rolled from the singer's throat; she sang with a heart full of love for her friend; she sang with thoughts of home; she

sang with thoughts of him who had been so kind during her mountain exile; she sang in harmony with her surroundings; she sang in praise to the Maker of the universe; she sang unconscious of her angelic power; she sang because her very soul was filled with melody; she sang as she had never sung before.

An hour had nearly passed since the beginning of the most exquisite measures, ever filled by mortal voice, when Elva in her faithful watch, noticing a slight change in her friend, again took up the Fairy song, and continued till

Unie was wide awake.

"There!" exclaimed Elva; "I have sung you to sleep, Little One, and sung you awake, and you must be tired from a surfeit of music."

"Thank you so much!" said Unie. "I have had a most wonderful fascinating dream. I dreamed I was roaming through fairy-land; I was well, and strong; I could run about as well as any or them, and never get tired; you were with me, and I called you, little sister; we gathered the beautiful flowers which blossomed abundantly throughout the realm; everywhere I strayed I heard the sweetest of music; it seemed to be borne on the summer breeze through the whispering trees, till all the land rang with melody; the fairies joined the mighty chorus, and I was trying to catch the strain, when I awoke, finding you were the fairy that was so enchanting, through my dream of ecstasy!"

"Their abode is at Rosevale!" said Violet, who was seated on the veranda with her parents, and Aunt Lida, enjoying the beautiful songs of the gifted singer. "We

know the fairies dwell in our midst."

"Truly, they are fairies," coincided Mr. Morriton; and I wish we might keep them together."

"I think your wish may be gratified," answered Aunt

Lida with a sagacious look.

Mr. Morriton thought she referred to an extended visit, having no knowledge of his son's affection for the beautiful girl.

CHAPTER XII.

A MOUNTAIN EPISODE.

THE Fairies, as they were called from that time, resumed their pleasant intercourse.

"Unie," said Elva, "when are you going to grant me

the pleasure of viewing your sketches?"

"O, any time; now, if you would like. Aunt Lida," she called, "will you please bring my sketches for Elva to look over?"

The Aunt hastened to do her bidding, and soon returned

with a well-filled portfolio.

Elva was much interested in the drawings which showed a marvellous skill for an amateur. "They are wonderful! They are perfect! Many scenes are familiar to me, in the poems from which you have taken them, and they are ably executed! You have a noble gift, Unie!"

"But what is this?" she continued, glancing at a book, larger than the others, bearing the title, "A Mountain Episode, in Living Characters, or Modern Mythology

Illustrated."

"O you Little Darling, don't look at that one, please!" expostulated Unie. "It's only some of Harry's nonsense

sent for my amusement."

"I know," answered Elva; "and I wish to satisfy my curiosity in regard to them, as I am the original. Harry gave me permission, so you will not mind, if I am amused also." She opened the book, which consisted of a series of pictures, with appropriate names, and descriptions attached.

The first was one bearing the words, "Persephone seeking a new specimen;" it portrayed a young lady gathering flowers in the foreground. The features were those of Miss Darling. In the distance, a cow was quietly grazing on the rich herbage of the field. The background showed

a mountain range whose lofty peaks reached boldly to the clouds. The whole presented a pleasing pastoral scene.

The second one, called "A Beastly Interruption," was similar to the first. It represented the same scene with a change in the characters. The maiden, unconscious of the proximity of an inquiring neighbor, had gathered all the botanical specimens in her vicinity, and turned to seek a fresh supply in another direction, when she most unexpectedly confronted the obtrusive beast. She was so terrified, her eyes seemed to protrude from their sockets; the awful beast had assumed the gigantic proportions of the animals of prehistoric times; while the imagination had enlarged the horns, till they equalled the mountain peaks in altitude.

The third of the series was named, "An Atlanta of the Present Day;" it showed the same maiden with disheveled locks running at headlong speed from the supposed danger. It afforded a good illustration of the power of the imagination. The one unoffending animal had become magnified into a large drove, which was intent upon devouring the trespasser of its domains.

The fourth was headed, "A Dire Calamity;" it marked the heroine of the flight sitting in a despondent attitude upon the ground, where she had apparently fallen from an injured foot. At a distance, lay the slipper which had been lost in the mad race. The cow had returned to its feeding ground, and was quietly grazing unconscious of the havoc

which her untimely appearance had caused.

The fifth was humorously styled, "Off Her Trolley, or Impeded Locomotion." The young lady was painfully striving, by creeping like an infant, to reach the shelter of a neighboring tree, whose sturdy branches extended an irresistible invitation.

The sixth bore the suggestive words, "Watching and Waiting, or Patience on a Monument." It showed Miss Darling seated upon a low supporting arm of an oak. To her, this tree was a fortress invulnerable to the attack of any

animal that had ever descended from the Ark. A melancholy look rested upon her countenance, while she sat patiently waiting in the leafy retreat for the departure of the dreaded creature. At the left, in the distance, a young

man was seen approaching.

"The Good Samaritan on the Wrong Side," prefaced the seventh. It was a reproduction of the preceding one, with but one slight exception; the change in the position of the young man. He had reached the wall, when, preparatory to springing over it, he espied a young lady perched upon one of the lowest branches of the tree. His quick perception enabled him, at once, to comprehend the situation; that she had taken up her present quarters, as a necessity, after running from the cow. But why she should climb a tree instead of getting over the adjacent wall, he failed to understand. Thinking he might be of assistance in aiding her to descend from the lofty pedestal, he kindly offered his services. The way in which they were received was plainly shown by the look of indignation, and astonishment which overshadowed the little maiden's face.

The old familiar words "A Bird in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush," met the eye of the observer, as she turned to the eighth folio. It was the last of this most wonderful series. The mountain range had faded nearly away into a bluish gray blending with the distant atmosphere. A rough field of stone and stubble extended to the highway in the foreground. At the right, a glimpse of the hotel was caught. Harry was seen carrying Miss Darling carefully across the barren field. That he was master of the situation was evident, from the smile of satisfaction which brightened his countenance, and conveyed the intelligence, that, like "Hobson's choice," it was the only way provided.

"How beautiful they are!" exclaimed Elva, as she laid aside the collection. "Harry, by his originality has rendered them true to nature, and executed them with a master's hand. These exquisite little gems of art, not only

show his brotherly affection, but also speak of careful watchfulness for your welfare, during his absence, and you

must prize them very highly."

"Yes," replied Unie, "I count Harry's 'crayonettes,' as he calls them, among my priceless treasures! But they will never seem as beautiful to me, since I find he has so caricatured my friend. You must pardon him for the liberty he has taken to make you the subject of these sketches."

"Indeed, one could not bear malice against Harry, for his unequaled good humor enables him to ignore such petty traits. Besides, I have been granted that privilege, so seldom given to our sex of seeing myself, as others see me, and I am very grateful to the artist for his delineation of character. But, Unie, do you realize that you and Harry possess superior talents which might benefit the world?"

"Why, Elva, what can you possibly mean?" asked

Unie, in a bewildered manner.

"Simply, that you both are wrapping this choice gift in a napkin, and hiding it from longing eyes!" answered Elva. "You might remove it from its place of concealment, and allow others to share its beauties."

"I still fail to comprehend your meaning," said Unie,

more puzzled at her companion's suggestions.

"My dear Little One," added Elva in explanation, "to relieve your anxious heart, and clear away all ambiguity I will state my meaning. I think you might illustrate various works for the publishers and render them more interesting, and valuable. Not that I would suggest anything that might lead to overwork, or in the smallest degree be detrimental to your frail constitution. I know you are accustomed to pass many moments in such occupation, for amusement; now, your sketches are so beautiful, I think a place would be given them among the works of art. As your modest retiring nature would cause you to shrink from all notoriety, you might become

an unknown benefactor to the world in general; that is, you might use the income for philanthropy. There are many struggling amateurs whom you might help to a better livelihood."

"Why, Elva, do you really mean that I could accomplish anything for the good of others? I should be only too delighted to do so, had I the ability!" affirmed the

wondering girl.

"In answer, Unie dear, I would say, submit what you have already done, and see with what enthusiasm it is received by the public. You and Harry might combine your sketches, and call them 'The Lotus Leaves.' It would be a most appropriate name, as they would cause the beholder to forget all care, and anxiety by their entrancing pictures; while the weary and afflicted ones might be lulled into a state of ecstasy, forgetful of all pain and sorrow."

"O, Elva, if I only could, how happy I should be!" exclaimed the incredulous maiden. "I could help many

I know, who have none of this 'world's goods.'"

"I have friends who are publishers, and I will write them about the matter, if you would like," resumed Elva. "I am confident that your success will be unbounded; and, I am perfectly willing the 'mountain episode' should be included, as it would give zest to the whole collection. I would keep it a secret from all except Harry; tell him of your intention, and everything pertaining to it. I am convinced he not only will congratulate you upon the undertaking, but will aid materially as an equal contributor. His stay at the Adirondacks will enable him to furnish many sketches, while the beauties of California will be so attractive, that he cannot possibly resist the inclination to transfer them to paper, for your benefit."

CHAPTER XIII.

KEEPING A SECRET.

Hervey and Harry did not prolong their stay beyond a few weeks at the Adirondacks. Neither the fair halcyon days which almost uninterruptedly dawned upon them, while they afforded others hours of happiness, and enjoyment could wholly satisfy them; nor, the grandeur of the mountain scenery enhanced by the brilliancy of autumn with her varied tints, though appealing to the sense of the beautiful, was sufficient for their pleasure. An indefinable want intruded itself, which could not be banished, either by time or scene. A little cloud had arisen upon the horizon which was gradually overspreading their fair skies with shades of disappointment.

The shadows rested more darkly upon Hervey's path, than on Harry's. Harry, with his brusque manner formed the center of many attractive gatherings, from which Hervey's reticence debarred him. Harry was eagerly sought by the newly-made friends and acquaintances, and always contributed to their entertainment by his brilliant conversation, and sparkling wit. Very soon after his arrival, no set was considered complete without his presence. The younger brother was the hero of the passing hour, while the elder was held somewhat in awe, from his natural re-

serve.

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One evening, the boys sat in their room reading letters from home. Hervey had finished one from the Doctor, having communicated several items of interest to Harry. The second letter absorbed him so greatly that all intercourse was suspended; it was an epistle from Miss Darling, and it wafted him from the present surroundings to the happy days at the Mountains. Beautiful visions with roseate hues of the future were delighting the yearning heart, when Harry interrupted, and the glowing fancies shared the fate of one's wondrous air-castles.

"Just listen to this, will you, Hervey?" said Harry. Little Unie is growing ambitious, and wants to enter this great world of competition! What next, I wonder!"

"What do you mean?" asked Hervey, aroused from his state of oblivion. "I think you must have made some

mistake."

Harry read from Unie's letter the desire concerning the sketches, and the wish that he would assist her, that they might accomplish some good for others, by helping them in their struggles. "Now, do you credit my statement, and see that I am not dreaming?" he asked.

"Yes," responded Hervey, "though I fail to comprehend what could possibly have suggested such an under-

taking to timid little Unie."

"Whew!" ejaculated Harry. "I am requested to keep this a profound secret. Unie says Elva will manage everything for her, if I approve. She is becoming quite interested in the anticipation of pleasing those who are unable to view the scenes. She also states that the 'Lotus Leaves' will be made up of folios; the sketch on one side with a description on the opposite page, furnished by Elva. It seems they are both eager to commence the new enterprise, and only await my sanction. I will send word by return mail that they are welcome to my contributions, if they can make any possible use of them; and I will help all I am able during our travels."

"How strange!" remarked Hervey, "that those two little ones should propose such an undertaking! It will be very valuable, if the material used is good! I do not

know much of the ability of either sister or brother!"

"Never fear, old chap, anything detrimental to Unie's sketches! They are simply immense! And I am glad she is not going to hide them 'under a bushel,' any longer. As for mine, the least said about them the better; they have been done only for Unie's benefit, and if she thinks them good for anything she's welcome. But how about the secret?" asked Harry. "Don't you think we shall be able to keep

it? I will do the way the girls do when they have one they wish to keep. For fear they might forget the important fact they ask their nearest friend to help them keep it!

So please keep silent!"

"O, Harry, don't be sarcastic!" said Hervey. "We will congratulate the girls upon their noble work, and do all we can to aid them by contributions. It will afford me great pleasure to write descriptions of all the sketches which you

may make."

"All right!" acquiesced Harry. I shall hold you to your promise, and we will surprise them by our efforts. I am so glad for Unie, that she has this project in hand, as it will contribute so much to her happiness. She has always had such great aspirations to do good to others, that I think her zeal in this work will be crowned with success. Why I am always trying to buoy her up, myself, by telling her the vast amount of good she does me."

"You speak truly, my brother, her influence is sweet to us all," assured Hervey. "What a veritable little sunbeam Miss Darling is; she spreads her cheering rays over all within her range, and brightens their life with the comforting assurance that they are helping others. The best panacea ever given a weary heart, is to aid one more afflicted, and

lose its own sorrow while ministering unto another."

"That's true!" assented Harry; "I fully indorse that sentiment every time!" And, fearing that his brother might refer to the sacrifice he had made by sharing his travels, he turned the conversation into another channel, by asking with great earnestness, "Do you know why this charming retreat is not so attractive to us, as the Franconia Notch?"

Before Hervey could frame a suitable response, he answered his own query. "It is the absence of the 'Mountain Maid.' You see her presence cast a glamour over the whole scene, making everything beautiful, whether nature smiled or frowned. It is her absence that blinds us to all the beauties of this region. Surely the fates have been

propitious in your case, and you should profit from their kindness."

"What do you mean?" asked Hervey, aroused from the alluring meditative mood, into which Harry's words had carried him.

"That you, like Mohammed, must go to the mountain!" Seeing the puzzled look still resting upon his brother's face, he added by way of explanation, "I discovered the mountain, and led you to it; you gazed enraptured upon its wondrous beauty; yet, strange to relate, you departed with an unsatisfied heart. 'A word to the wise is sufficient!"

Hervey smiled at the ingeniousness of the simile, and fully understood its application. "Thank you," he cordially replied, and turned the conversation into another channel, fearing that such an inquisitor might suggest some impropriety from which he would be compelled to shrink. "I am greatly interested in the advent of 'Lotus Leaves,' and think that even I may be able to add a mite. I remember a charming little nook where I rested a few days ago; it opened upon a scene so charming that its beauty is still impressed upon me, and I wish we might add it to the collection."

"All right, my boy, you shall have your heart's desire!" he answered ambiguously, with twinkling eyes, which plainly showed that he saw through the flimsy subterfuge. He concluded he would let the matter drop, as his arrow had found the mark at which he had aimed. "I don't think a little description will interfere with your improvement; it will be a blessing during your restriction, in proving that you are of some assistance, which is so comforting to us poor mortals, that we cannot content ourselves without it."

On visiting the scene the following day, Harry found that Hervey's description had not been exaggerated. "My little Unie will think this a glimpse of fairy-land!" he exclaimed, as he contemplated the prospect. "You can describe with pen while I describe with paint."

Both seated themselves and began their labors. Harry quickly sketched the principal points in the landscape, and brought them into a fine picture by means of water-colors.

Hervey, surprised at the rapidity with which he executed so correct a picture, asked, "How do you perform such excellent work when you are only an amateur? I cannot understand it!"

"O, it's easy enough! I just draw round what I see, and then put in a few lights and shades. You see that sheet of water, yonder, touches the adjoining land in a curve, don't you? So I draw that, and just touch it up a little, here and there, and the first thing I know, I have a representation of nature. Not very good, I'll admit, but passable, as some recognize it, or say they do, which is the same. Then it is easy for me, as I always see a picture in everything."

"My dear brother, this is entirely inexplicable to me; you might just as well give a little child who has learned his alphabet, and can frame a few words, the dictionary, and require you to write him an essay, by telling him he will find all the words which he requires in that book, as try to make me understand your adjustment of lights and

shades, and the prospective! It is beyond me."

The new occupation dispelled the shadows which depressed them, and engaged the remaining hours of their sojourn. A new impetus thrilled their hearts and many contributions were sent from California, for the "Lotus Leaves," which encouraged the noble girls in their great

work.

CHAPTER XIV.

"LOTUS LEAVES."

THE early part of November found the Morritons settled in their city home. Elva accompanied them, at their earnest solicitation. The grandeur of the great mansion, with its spacious court was somewhat appalling at first. The late season still smiled upon the park; flowers, with the rich unrivaled tints of autumn bloomed in stately splendor; and, even roses shed their fragrance upon the air.

"Unie, it seems as though I was in a dream, visiting another world, filled with all the wealth of beauty and art!" remarked Elva, one dreamy Indian summer's day, as both were seated in Unie's bower. "I had thought Roselands the most beautiful place I had ever beheld, but this magnificence is beyond comparison. There is more of nature there, while here, both nature and art are combined. How beautiful it all is! And how wonderful! I almost shrink from speaking, lest these scenes of glory should depart!"

"I am pleased that you enjoy is so much, as I am very

happy here, and wish you to be also," replied Unie.

"I have been thinking," continued Elva, as she inhaled the perfume of a rose which had crept into the bower, above the seat, if this mansion made by man is so beautiful, what of the mansions above, 'not made by hands' in 'Our Father's home!"

"O, Elva, this is but dross!" Unie immediately answered. There can be no comparison between the two; it is beyond our comprehension. "Do you not remember that it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered in to the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him?"

"True, but this seems too much like Paradise, to be of earth!" asserted Elva. "I am inexpressibly delighted in being permitted to revel amid such glowing realms. Out of all your abundance, you can comfort many who are not so favored, as your compassionate heart would lead. New zeal for the 'Lotus Leaves' inspires me, as I view all the possibilities within your reach, enhanced by these

pleasant surroundings."

Elva was given a room near Unie, in order that they might easily communicate. Unie offered the full liberty of her charming and attractive parlor, which was gratefully accepted. The sprained ankle was slowly being restored to its normal condition; but so slowly was the improvement marked, that it was scarcely noticeable by the oft-discouraged maiden.

Elva made arrangements with the publishers who were friends of her family, by asking one of them to call upon her at the Morritons'. He complied with her request, and she laid the plan before him. He heartily commended the enterprise, and predicted great success, when is was fairly

launched forth upon its mission.

"It is really of great merit!" he said. "Just what is needed in the world of art. We have nothing of the kind; true, we have folios of exhibitions, and such like, which have occurred, but not anything like this. We will do our utmost to insure the 'Lotus Leaves' a place among the treasures of art."

Hervey and Harry had sent words of commendation, and acquiescence in the proposed work. "I can send all the sketches you want, till you weary of them," wrote the energetic Harry. "Hervey is helping me keep the secret, so don't be alarmed that I shall lose it. Indeed, the old chap is as delighted as I am about it all, and proposes to write a description of everything I send; you see that relieves me of the worst part, and gives me more freedom to supply your needs. I had much rather sketch a place, than write about it, so you perceive we both are suited."

The boys had reached the golden land upon the Pacific, and were delighted with its beauties and wonders. Both felt the exhilarating power of its mild breezes. They

deemed it the most beautiful place which they had seen, nature was so diversified.

Hervey, after grave reflection, presented the matter over which his mind had so long brooded, to Elva's father, and awaited its reception before communicating his wishes to

the daughter.

In reply, Mr. Darling wrote, "I will coincide in my daughter's choice; as I am fully convinced that her judgment would not allow her to select one who was in any way unworthy of her. Although you are a stranger to us, except from a slight knowledge gained from Elva's letters, we extend to you our heartfelt congratulations, should her answer be favorable."

Thus encouraged, Hervey hesitated no longer, and at once presented his cause to the 'Mountain Maid.' The answer received was satisfactory, filling his heart with such unbounded joy, that he felt he must tell Harry immediately of his good fortune. "I have a surprise in store for you;"

he said, as he finished his letter.

"O, no, you haven't!" his brother remarked. "None so blind as those who won't see!' But, 'better late than never!' And, old boy, you have my best wishes, and all that keeps them company, for your welfare!" he cried, extending both hands in congratulation. "Though I am a little surprised that you were so stupid; you need some one to guard you, and I will willingly relinquish in favor of the 'Little Darling!"

Both laughed, and Hervey added that no plans had been

arranged for the future.

"Be careful and not let too much happiness slip through

your fingers!" counseled Harry, with a warning look.

Hervey informed his parents of his brilliant prospects, and commended Elva to their loving care and protection. They were delighted at their son's choice, and expressed their joy to the little maid, that she was to be a daughter of the house. "Just what I have desired, ever since I have known her!" remarked the delighted father while the mother acquiesced.

"Just what I expected!" exclaimed Aunt Lida. "I am not the least surprised, and for once, things have not

gone contrary!" she added, with her astute wisdom.

The days at Morriton Mansion were very happy. Elva already seemed like one of their own; she entered heartily into all their interests. She gave two hours in the morning to the practise of music, with Violet. Unie was allowed the pleasure of listening to the thrilling strains, while resting enraptured in a comfortable easy-chair.

Violet was busy preparing for a grand musicale which should eclipse all previous endeavors, from the introduction

of Elva as the principal artist.

Elva spent the greater portion of the day with Unie, in her pleasant parlor; here they both were free from restraint, and could work uninterruptedly. She would not allow Unie to weary herself at any time; and, entreated her to rest upon the couch and describe the places, of the selected drawings. Unie's descriptive powers were excellent and Elva gathered the items of interest necessary for the publication from her dictation.

It was decided to present the public only fifty of the many etchings at first. A most careful selection was made, with the "Mountain Episode" included. Harry's descriptions were used with a few slight additions. Only one new sketch was added, by Unie; it was called "Dreamland," it represented the beauties of Roselands, when Elva sang

Unie into the realms of fairy-land.

The publishers wished to bring the work out, about the first of December, in season for Christmas. They issued notices of commendation, preparatory to its advent, so that many were eager for its appearance. They were successful in their labors. The "Lotus Leaves" were sent forth upon the world for its solace. The young maidens awaited with great anxiety the reception. After all, it was running a great risk to bring the work of an unknown artist before the world, and expect its approval.

A copy was sent to the principal publishers throughout

the country, immediately upon its publication, and their flattering comments, alone, would have created a ready

sale for the work, even had it been undeserving.

Elva and Unie watched its advent with a maternal care, greatly pleased at its unbounded success. A number of copies were finished most exquisitely in velvet, with the title "Lotus Leaves" in gold. One of these was sent each of the boys who had aided so materially by contributions

from the "golden land."

Christmas dawned bright and clear, flooding the earth with "peace and glad tidings." After partaking of breakfast, the family withdrew to the morning-room, where the gifts to all were deposited. Each was remembered with beautiful souvenirs. Elva was the recipient of mementoes from all. Even Harry had sent a little gift expressive of his good humor. It was a golden cow, for a scarf-pin; a card accompanied it, bearing these words: "For my new sister;" also a couplet, "When this you see, Remember me."

Amid the smiles of merriment, Elva promised obedience to the request, and said, "I shall wear it as an amulet in the future, against the attacks of the horned creatures, when-

ever I invade their domains."

Father and mother had received a box, bearing a card with these words, "With the best wishes of Elva and Unie. Aunt Lida, Doctor Herbert, and Violet found among their presents a similar one. "I think you girls must have found something which you knew we all should like, so have laid in a wholesome supply," exclaimed Violet, as she untied her parcel.

"Lotus Leaves!" she continued, reading the title, as she lifted the book from its resting place. "What an exquisite

little gem!" she said, while turning its pages.

"Lotus Leaves!" repeated the father; "that's the name of a collection of sketches which some unknown artist has ventured to float upon the sea of time. I was reading a short time since a most commendable article in their favor, and meant to have procured them for you, Unie, dear, as a Christmas present; but, it escaped my memory, and you have forestalled me. How did you get hold of them?" he inquired turning to Unie.

"From the publishers, through the assistance of Elva;" answered Unie, while an amusing look of intelligence

flashed upon their countenances.

The recipients of the folios were slowly turning their leaves, and praising the beautiful scenes which were so accurately portrayed, when Violet exclaimed, "These views are strangely familiar to me! I have seen them somewhere, I know! Why, here is that 'Mountain Episode' of Harry's!" and she looked inquiringly at Elva, who only smiled.

"What is this?" asked the astonished father as he turned to the sketch of "Dreamland." "This is Roselands with all its beauty! Look, mother!" he cried; "there is the Hudson gliding on its way to the sea, here, at the right; and the park with its fine old trees, and roses everywhere. I verily believe that is Unie herself in the hammock, as she lay that day when Elva sang about the fairies. Yes, it is! and there are the fairies themselves filling every nook, with praise, in unison with the birds. Why, Elva, do you possess this wonderful gift of art, in addition to your other talents? Is this your work?" he asked, turning to Elva with great astonishment.

"O, no! I am not so gifted!" she immediately replied.
"I have not the ability to delineate such beautiful pictures;
I am only able to assist in placing them in their proper

place," she added, giving a sagacious look to Unie.

Silence followed this assertion; but the mother's heart had discerned what was hidden from the others. She recognized, from the first, Unie's handiwork, and the great joy of the discovery alone kept her silent. Rising from her chair she went to Unie, and imprinted a loving kiss upon her brow, saying, "I thank you, my precious daughter, for this splendid gift. It is of inestimable value to us, as it is the work of your own hands. And, you, also, my dear Elva, must receive our thanks," she said, turning to kiss her.

Without your assistance, this choice book would never have been seen."

Great surprise was depicted upon the faces of the family; each one congratulated the girls upon the success of the enterprise.

"You must have invoked all the muses to your aid, to

have been so favored!" said Violet.

"To think we had such a genius in our midst and never dreamed of her existence!" remarked Doctor Herbert.

"Well, Unie, this will make you rise from obscurity to fame!" said the delighted father; "besides yielding you

a fair income, if I am any judge of such things!"

"O, no, papa! I am not seeking fame, only trying to help the needy ones who have not been so blest as I have been. I do not care to be known, I am simply a friend, and wish that I may remain so," said Unie.

"Just as you wish, little one! though some may ask me if I know the author of 'Lotus Leaves;' while others may afflict you with letters of thanks, and seek your name! So

much for being famous!" added the father.

Aunt Lida quietly remarked "Truth is stranger than fiction;" and "our blessings are always within our reach,

if we will only stretch out and grasp them!"

The "Lotus Leaves" received an enthusiastic welcome from the public, wherever they appeared. The publishers found that several editions were necessary to meet the large demands. Much curiosity was expressed at their appearance, and numerous letters were received concerning their authorship.

CHAPTER XV.

"WHO IS SHE?"

EVERYTHING that was bright and beautiful surrounded the pathway of Violet Morriton. Her outward life was encircled with the best and the fairest which the world could bestow. Wealth lavishly supplied every wish, as soon as expressed; yet, it gave neither satisfaction nor happiness even in the smallest degree. Nothing permanent could be found, though the zealous maiden searched diligently for something beyond her possession; but, it ever eluded her grasp, like the evanescent spirit of a dream. The accomplishment of one desire only paved the way for its successor. Her soul was ready to cry out with the Preacher, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" but she strove to stifle its cries by a deeper plunge into the pleasures of life. The more difficult any project appeared, the more determined she became upon its consummation.

On the removal of the family to New York, Violet had at once entered the most select circles of fashionable society. She become the center of attraction, and many receptions were given in her favor. Her excellent education admitted her to the most exclusive literary set; while her musical abilities which had been trained most assiduously to the highest order, gained, not only a wide-spread reputation, but an enthusiastic appreciation. She was a valuable

acquisition to the world of literature and art.

All Violet's energies, since her return, were centered upon the coming musicale. It had been decided to hold it during the first week of the New Year. The eventful time had arrived, and the doors of the mansion were thrown open to the favored ones. Violet, flushed with the excitement of the hour, exclaimed, "O, Elva, if you only will do as much for me, as you did for Unie, we will compete with the grand old masters!" Elva promised the best of her ability and Violet's fears

were temporarily allayed.

Several new names appeared upon the programme, making the guests expectant of a rich treat. They had heard the finest artists whom Violet had presented, and had no misgivings as everything which she did was not only admired but imitated.

Professor Stedman rendered selections from Wagner, Mozart and Schubert so finely that the audience were

filled with delight.

Miss Louise Barker, a classmate of Violet's and a graduate from the school of oratory, charmed all with her readings. She was an inimitable impersonator, and with a few slight

changes represented the public men of the day.

Amid the burst of applause which followed a solo given by a Mr. Crane, an excellent baritone, Elva seated herself at the piano. A hush fell over the assembly as she fondly stroked the keys. She carried her listeners with her; beginning with a sweet pastoral evening choral, with chirps of insects, and birds calling to their mates, with the distant taps sounding the hour of rest; then followed an adagio, with its slow undulating measures, almost lulling one to rest; gradually it broke into an allegretto; nature awoke from her repose and flooded the earth with praise. So entranced were they at its close, that a moment of silence followed; than a wave of praise swept through the grand saloon, such as Violet had never before witnessed.

It had been decided that no encores could be given, from the length of the programme; but an exception was made to satisfy the company. Elva cheerfully gave a second selection; and, had she yielded to their desires, no other

numbers would have appeared.

Violet and Elva executed a duet upon the organ and piano increasing the pleasure of the company; they refrained from an encore, seeing that both would appear later on in the same order.

The remaining numbers were given, and rapturously

applauded, till the finale was reached, "A solo, by Miss Darling, with violin obligato, by Dr. Herbert Morriton. A delightful suspense filled the hearts of all assembled, as they wondered what new pleasure was in store for them. A flutter of incredulity ran through their minds, that nothing could excel that which had preceded. The artists, with Violet as accompanist gathered at the piano, and took up the music of the opera "Lohengrin." The audience could hardly restrain themselves till the end was reached, interrupting several times with applause. Never, had they heard such a glorious rendering; such heavenly strains. Elva's voice was at its best; clear, sweet, and pure as a silver bell. The Doctor was equal to De Seve, as he tenderly drew the bow across the vibrating instrument; while Violet seemed gifted with the power of Orpheus to free the imprisoned music of the spheres. An overwhelming burst of applause and admiration filled the spacious mansion; gratifying the servants who sat spellbound in their cozy parlor, listening to the music.

When the applause had subsided, Violet introduced

Miss Darling, the "musical wonder" to her guests.

"Who is she?" was the question which rose in their hearts, and would have found utterance had not etiquette forbidden.

Lu Barker, however, could not restrain her curiosity, and inquired of Violet at the first opportunity. "Who is she? Where did you find her? How awfully nice of you to give us such a nightingale! Who is she, anyway?" she asked breathlessly. "I am dying to know all about her!"

"That your death may not be laid to my neglect, I will try to answer your questions so that society may not be deprived of your valuable services," answered Violet, amusingly. "Miss Darling is a native of the 'Old Bay State,' from among the Berkshire Hills, I believe; she received her musical education in Germany. Dear Lu, I cannot further enlighten you concerning her antecedents, as I did not find her. She is Unie's friend."

Undaunted at the failure of her inquiries, she again extended them, on meeting Unie. "O! you dear little one, how are you this evening? You must be improving, I know, or you would not be present at Vi's musicale!" she continued without noticing that she allowed no chance for an answer. "How awfully nice it was! How awfully kind of you to let us hear your Swedish Nightingale! Where did you find her? And, who is she?"

Unie looked at Louise with surprise till it dawned upon her that she was referring to Elva. "She is the dearest friend that I possess on earth; I am very fond of her, and look upon her as a sister. I have known her only a few short months, and she had made life sweeter to me ever since. But I did not find her; Aunt Lida brought her to

me," she said, wonderingly.

"O, by the way!" exclaimed Louise in departing, "have you seen the new work of art, called 'Lotus Leaves,' which

has taken the world by storm?"

"Yes! I have a copy!" answered Unie, fearful that the penetrating Louise might gain a knowledge of its author-

ship.

"Of course you would have!" she exclaimed, "and you must appreciate it, as you are an amateur yourself! It's awfully sweet, isn't it? I am dying to learn who the author is, and if I ascertain I will inform you; so, au revoir, for the present." She flitted away thinking the blush spreading over Unie's countenance, which her query had caused, was the result of the evening's excitement.

She would, without doubt have been more surprised could she have known that a solution of all she wished was within her power; in fact, so near that the least touch might disclose its hiding place! An undeniable fact that humanity does not possess sufficient intuition to unravel

the unseen!

This second disappointment only served to incite Louise to a greater determination to ascertain, if possible, where the Morritons found such a treasure, and who she was. She shrank, however, from catechising Aunt Lida, she was so "awfully funny" in her estimation, "but if an opportunity

presents itself, I will avail myself of it," she thought.

The convenient "opportunity" did not present itself, for some time. A most recherche lunch with dainties from other climes had been served in the elegant dining-room, and Louise began to doubt her ability of success in the quest. She watched Elva, to see if she could detect any awkwardness, or breach of etiquette; but found her well-bred, and no stranger to the elite. It flashed upon her that if she waited she would certainly find out.

"Are you not enjoying yourself, my dear?" asked Aunt Lida, seeing the thoughtful expression which momentarily

shaded Louise's brow.

"O, yes, Aunt Lida!" she replied immediately breaking from her light reverie. "I'm having an awfully nice time!" Seeing that an opportune time had arrived, she returned to the all-absorbing subject. "What an awfully sweet little body Miss Darling is!" she exclaimed. "How awfully delighted you must be to have her with you! Do you know her people?"

Aunt Lida saw at once through the ruse of praise adopted by Louise, that she might gain information, and answered accordingly. "I attended the same seminary as her aunt, some time ago; but of late years, we have somewhat drifted

apart."

Louise, gratified at the result of her investigation, placed Elva as one of their set. Feeling sure of a ready response on all important points, she continued. "Where did you find Miss Darling, Auntie? Unie tells me, you made the

discovery, but did not state how, or where."

"I found her at the White Mountains, suffering from a sprained ankle. She was somewhat lonely, as her party were obliged to leave her, and continue their travels. Accordingly, I took compassion upon her, and gave a prescription for the afflicted member," said Aunt Lida, deliberately.

"But who is she?" ejaculated Louise, not caring for the details which had been so freely furnished. "So strange

I never heard of her before!"

"She is Hervey's promised wife; and we all are nearly, if not quite, as much interested in her as he is," quietly

explained Aunt Lida.

For once, Louise Barker had nothing to say, and was at an end in her search for information. Utter astonishment nearly deprived her of her senses. She crushed a feeling in the heart, of which she had previously been unconscious. For a moment, she doubted the accuracy of her own ears. Reason, however, assured her that the announcement coming from a near relative of the family, must be authentic. She quickly recalled the wandering senses to their wonted energies, and smilingly said, "How awfully nice! Allow me to extend my congratulations!"

Aunt Lida knew the characteristics of her companion, and felt assured that she would not search any deeper into the genealogy of the Darlings, from the startling intelligence which she had communicated. She was satisfied that Louise would impart the "latest," with great zest, to her receptive hearers, and was secretly amused to find

how quickly she left her company for that purpose.

Louise Barker was one of the many types of the young ladies of the present time; bright, sparkling, social and interesting; the life of the set in which she moved. She was neither a gossip-dealer, a tattler, or a scandal bulletin. Well-informed upon current events from many sources, she simply communicated the knowledge, without a thought of malice. As a butterfly flitting from flower to flower, gathering and distributing sweets, so she flitted among her friends scattering the pearly drops of love, joy, and happiness. Praise was more readily given than censure, while she always found pity even for the faults of others.

Before the company had bidden the Morritons goodnight, Louise had communicated the important item of news, to each one, that Miss Darling was the fiancee of the eldest son, Hervey Morriton. Thus the question, "Who is she?" was most unexpectedly and satisfactorily answered;

and the mystery solved regarding her position.

CHAPTER XVI.

"THE BEST LAID SCHEMES O' MICE AN' MEN GANG AFT AGLEY."

THE season, with all its social attractions had ended. It had been a very enjoyable one to Violet Morriton, from the brilliancy of the many engagements which still illumined the passing days. The memory of the musicale yet lingered The pleasures of past and preswith its marvellous success. ent were being laid aside under a new plan of happiness, for the coming summer. The sun of anticipation had risen in dazzling splendor upon the horizon of her life; its genial rays permeated the pulses, and deepened the flush upon the cheek. Earth held, for the time being, no fairer prospect than the pleasure of viewing the old world, with her dearest friend, Mary Arthurs. Everything which human forethought could devise was already arranged, and it seemed as though the realization would far exceed the brightest hopes, when Mrs. Arthurs' letter arrived throwing Violet into a state of ebullition against the paramount claims of duty.

Calmed by philosophical reasoning, Violet, without a trace of agitation resting upon her countenance, entered the morning room, where Mr. and Mrs. Morriton were engaged with letters from the boys. "I'm proving the

verity of that old Scotch saying,

'The best laid schemes o' mice an' men

Gang aft a-gley,"

she exclaimed.

"What, now! Vi, dear?" asked the father, knowing that his daughter's reasonings came from an unexpected source.

"O, nothing! only our European trip is not to be thought of, as Mary cannot possibly break the terrible chain which binds her so closely to duties! You see by her letter, what a barricade has been raised against it," she continued as

she read its contents to the wondering parents.

"There!" cried Violet, at the close of the reading, "don't you think this fully proves the truth of that old assertion? I see no other way, but an utter abandonment of the whole scheme!"

"Just as you please!" added Mr. Morriton. "We will have a pleasure trip after the wedding; but that reminds me, you need not be deprived of your outing after all. You could make one of the bridal party. I know Hervey and Elva would be delighted to have you with them, as they view the wonders of the Orient."

"O, no, I thank you, papa!" quickly retorted Violet. "You know 'Two is company,' and so forth; please excuse me from forming the third of a bridal party! I can arrange something while at Roselands, even if I am obliged to run to Saratoga, to see Mary in her new occupation, as nurse."

But the mother knew that under this vein of apparent levity, a restless heart was wildly throbbing against its disappointment. Wishing that she might help its struggles, she quietly remarked, "I do not see, Violet, why you should renounce the intended pleasure! Why not avail yourself of Mary's proposition, and invite Beatrice Moreland to travel with you?"

"Beatrice Moreland!" repeated Violet; "you know, mamma, how I shrank from her flattery and patronage, as a child, and how can she be endurable now, when the same

ingredients make up her life!"

"But, my dear, time may have healed those glaring defects," the mother continued. "Mingling with the best society may have proved advantageous to her and imparted

a knowledge not otherwise obtained."

"I have no faith in the change!" said the unconvinced daughter. "Old Father Time would have had the greatest contract which he ever yet undertook, to obliterate the defects of Beatrice Moreland's character. I should even be so incredulous at any improvement that I should think

it only an acquired gloss, which might wear off at any time, from the least friction. Deliver me, please, from the buzzing of the 'Busy Bee!' If the winged family were only endowed with intellect, they might well be proud of their namesake! for a more industrious Bee never existed; she

reigns as Queen in the great universal hive!"

Silence followed this violent outburst; its unveiled sarcasm clearly revealed to the parents the position which Mrs. Moreland held in their daughter's estimation. They had nothing further to suggest; and, as every suggestion had failed to meet Violet's approval, she dropped the matter, by leaving their presence; entering the music-room she seated herself at the piano, and concealed, very effectually, her disappointment under the most brilliant fantasies.

On and on, the beautiful melodies floated through the morning hours to mid-day, and still Violet continued the fascinating diversion, unmindful of all. Nothing animate or inanimate, neither time nor scene had sufficient power to arrest her attention. The spiritual, for the time, transcended the physical, and held undivided sway. It quietly accomplished its mission of lulling the struggling heart

into submission, by its soothing power.

It was a novel experience to the entranced maiden; she found it intensely interesting, as being something out of the ordinary. Hitherto, in her moods of abstraction, the spirit of unrest had reigned supreme, crushing out the noble sentiments, by forcing the rebellious heart into an apathetic resignation. But, now, a subtle power was filling its avenues, and softly smoothing every harsh and discordant note. In some strange, sweet inexplicable way, she was receiving consolation, and found it exceedingly gratifying. It was as though a long, weary search had ended, and a coveted realm had been found. Orpheus had yielded to the kindred aspirant, and opened his rich treasury of harmonies. She had lost consciousness of individuality, for the first time, and was willing to remain in the

acquiescent state, when she became aware of another's

presence, and turned to find her sister.

"Why, Unie!" she exclaimed, "when did you come? You must have crept in, like a little mouse, to leave me unaware of your presence." Even then, while seeking an answer to her question, the fingers kept up a running accompaniment as if impelled by a hidden force.

"I came in very stealthily, nearly two hours ago," answered Unie. "We missed you from lunch, but thought best not to interrupt, as you were playing so beautifully. What music is it, Vi? I think I never heard anything like it before. I do hope, dear, I have not disturbed you."

"O, no; not in the least!" answered Violet, in explanation. "I was only improvising a little to pass away the time. I had no idea of the hours, which you tell me have passed away since I came here. I only know, and realize that I have played myself into a happy frame of mind, so the day has not been wholly wasted."

"But, Vi, dear, what rare old collection have you discovered? Or, is it something which Elva left to brighten

the days of her absence?" asked Unie wonderingly.

"You dear, little Father Confessor!" responded Violet, "Elva never saw these wandering fancies, nor even heard my 'lost chord,' I trust. Neither have I unearthed any treasure from the lost arts!"

Unie was completely mystified, at the result of her inquiries, and, after a moment's reflection, ventured to repeat her former question. "But what were you playing, Vi, dear? Surely you must know something about it!"

"Truly, I do not, strange as it may seem to you," answered Violet, wheeling round in the piano-chair, and facing her incredulous sister. "To relieve your suspense I might add that I was not playing much of anything, or nothing at all; that is, as I remember."

"I think you must have been in fairy-land, and discovered its sweetest music, and sent it echoing through the house for our benefit," said Unie, as a sage smile of satisfaction

beamed upon her countenance. "But, on returning to your normal state, ar'n't you hungry? Or have your little

companions sustained you, with invisible nectar?"

"Yes," replied Violet, "I must confess, Unie, a little lunch would be most agreeable, as my wanderings have created quite an appetite; if you do not object, I will accompany you up-stairs, and send for something more substantial than dewdrops and honeyed sweets."

CHAPTER XVII.

VIOLET'S CONFESSION.

THE sisters repaired to Unie's boudoir, where a dainty little lunch of cold chicken and fruits was arranged, accord-

ing to Violet's orders.

"You must be wearied, Unie, from listening to my vagaries and had better recline upon the couch;" said Violet. "I will move the table beside it, and sit opposite. Perhaps, while I am satisfying my normal demands, by doing justice to the viands, I may tempt you to share some of

these luscious grapes and oranges."

Unie complied with the suggestion, delighted that she was enabled to offer the hospitality of her room. She could not understand Violet's new mood, but attributed it to the magic of the fairy-wand which still cast its spell over her. She gazed upon her with wrapped admiration, charmed with her communicative manner, and wondered

what she would propose next.

Yet through all this enjoyment there ran a vein of regret. The chord of affection extending between the two was so strong that whatever influenced one, was felt in a corresponding degree by the other. I am told that the bond of sympathy existing between twins is one of the greatest of the human virtues. If true, then it is easily conceived how one may lose sight of self and find it in the other; or "lay down his life, and take it up again," as the divine Master taught his disciples.

Unie felt the change in Violet's plans most keenly. She wished that she might devise some way by which this dense cloud of disappointment could be dispelled. Feeling her inability to do so, she turned with a tender look of compassion, and expressed her sorrow in the sweetest of tones. "O, Violet, I am so sorry your plans are all upset! What

will you do?"

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"Do!" repeated Violet, "why face the situation! Conquer fate! Resign myself to the inevitable! In short, make the best of everything, and take what the gods provide! I think I can pass a delightful summer with the family, and who knows but that I may assist in the preparation of another volume of the 'Lotus Leaves.'"

"Of course you could, as you understand just how a picture should look, even if you do not execute it. I am very thankful and appreciate your offer. I shall look for great results from it. But, Vi, dear, don't you care about

it?" asked Unie in a very serious tone.

"Do I look as if I did?" questioned Violet, turning with

a bright smile to her sister.

"No, you do not!" responded Unie. "You appear perfectly satisfied with it all; still I think you must have felt very badly at first. I am very glad, however, you don't mind it, and I will not trouble you by grieving over nothing. But, Vi, are you sure you really don't care?" repeated Unie, giving vent to the feelings which she could not suppress, surging through the heart.

Violet could only reply with a burst of sobs. All her boasted powers of endurance, and self-control seemed suddenly to have deserted, when most needed. Philosophy, even could devise no method whereby she could conceal her feelings. She sat, bowed beneath her woe, overwhelmed with grief as a stricken child grieving over a broken

and idolized toy, which could not be restored.

"Forgive me, please!" cried Unie, filled with consternation at this unexpected change of affairs. "I did not mean to wound you. I am so sorry for it all, that I am out of

patience with myself, for my stupidity."

"Do not blame yourself, you dear little Samaritan!" exclaimed Violet, drawing a deep sigh. "Like the one of old, you have seen my condition, and poured balm into my wounds. Do not mind these tears; they have relieved an overburdened heart."

"Thank you; though I cannot discern, wherein I have

been of the least comfort!" said Unie. "When you were bearing your disappointment so bravely, to think I upset

everything with the curiosity of a 'Mother Eve!'"

"Just what I needed!" said Violet, smiling at her sister's seriousness. "All my apparent courage vanished when tested, and disclosed only frail weakness. You, alone, are aware of the true condition of affairs. Mamma, I think, from the inquiring look which she sometimes bestows, wonders if I have wholly outgrown the childish habit of sulking over misfortunes. While papa imagines I have learned the philosophy of a Stoic, as time has advanced me to the estate of womanhood. But, alas! I have not! I inwardly rage and fume and fret, as though a child! have only learned the art of concealment from the changing years! So, my dear, little conscience-stricken sister, you have nothing to regret. Your probing has been beneficial, by showing me the motives of the heart. You have really bestowed a blessing, as I am happier with you, than alone, raging against fate."

"O, no, Violet, not so bad as that! You are not hypocritical, in the least. Do not censure yourself so much,

as I cannot agree," said Unie in extenuation.

"Yes, you will, when I inform you that I have been out of sorts, or out of tune, for the past ten years! My life has been one vast series of deceptions during all that time!"

"What do you mean?" almost demanded the incredulous listener, wondering if her sister was suddenly bereft of consciousness.

"That for ten long, weary years, I have been a living farce of myself!" repeated Violet. "I have presented a smiling exterior to the world, when all the time my heart was wearing itself out with its own grief over the unattainable. As a worm preys upon the life of a rose, so remorse has been preying into my very vitals; and strange as it may appear, I would not listen to conscience, and destroy the spoiler, but selfishly cherished it!"

"Poor suffering one, how I wish I might help you!"

exclaimed Unie. "Sometimes my heart has yearned over you, as I thought you were unhappy. But, I never supposed it as sad as it is. Perhaps, if we talk it over, we may think of some way that will free you from this trouble."

"No, there is no way out of this tangle," sadly responded Violet. "As I have already intimated, the whole responsibility rests upon me; and I would rather die than yield!"

"I do not understand," said Unie. "I should say from what knowledge I possess, you are unnecessarily severe

upon yourself."

"Understand!" reiterated Violet, "how could you, with your innocence! If I should tell you everything, I might convince you! And what can be more fitting, while at the confessional than to lay bare one's secrets! I have never known a happy moment since I parted from Alan Stuart. I have allowed you all to think that he broke our engagement from the change which came into his life; but it is not true; the fault was wholly mine, I—"

"O, Violet, do not tell me any more!" interrupted Unie.
"It must be very painful for you, and I know whatever you

did you thought it for the best."

"Alas! I did not; if I only had, what years of suffering might have been saved!" sadly mused Violet. "Allow me to continue, please, and, for once, place the case in a clear light. You may remember, Alan became a religious devotee, about three months previous to the time set for our wedding. At first I did not consider it of much importance; I looked upon it as a new fad, of which he would soon tire, and especially, when I was wholly disinterested. I soon perceived my mistake, as his fervor increased rather than diminished. He came to me with everything, never dreaming but that I would acquiesce in his grand philanthropic schemes! He talked of taking a part of his fortune to found a college for young men, while I was to do likewise for young ladies. My motive, however, was far different from his; mine was to stand well in the eyes of the world; it would add to the notoriety of Mrs. Alan Stuart to

lead as the benefactor of a college! His motive was simply to do good for his fellow-creatures. The days drifted along in this unsatisfactory manner, nearly two months, when the limit of my forbearance was reached. One evening, we had been arranging plans for the future, when Alan startled me by asking if it would make any material difference if our original intentions, in regard to the wedding trip were varied somewhat. I demanded his meaning, and he explained, by saying, that the great light which had dawned upon him, had opened his eyes to the realities of life. He could see things under a different aspect from what he had previously viewed them. And, in view of the great needs of mankind, he felt it to be his duty to alleviate them, as far as it lay in his power. For that reason, he was willing to devote the remainder of his life to that object. He even deemed it no sacrifice, but a pleasure intrusted to him. From his Utopian ideas I gathered that he hoped to reinstate man to his primal state which he occupied before the Fall. He felt in order to perform efficient work as a teacher among men, he needed some preparation. He had recently met an old college professor, and informed him of the marvellous change and his wishes regarding it. He had advised a two years' course at a certain university in Germany; stating he would give him a letter, telling of his requirements, to one of the teachers, an old friend of his. So if it made no difference, we would take only three months for the wedding trip, instead of the twelve, as originally planned. This arrangement would enable him to begin his studies in the early Fall, which he desired very much. He said, we might spend the three months wherever I thought best; all the vacations we could, also, spend in traveling if I liked. I had refrained from making any remarks during this surprising statement, but at this stage, I ventured the question, 'And what next?'

"He answered by saying I could take a course of musical study during his absence, lest I should miss him. After the close of the college course we were to return to our native

land in order that he might begin his remarkable career

of serving his fellow-man!

"Imagine, if you can, my chagrin, at seeing all the gorgeous air-castles, which I had erected, demolished by a single breath! I was already counting my triumphs as a leader in the fashionable world; a connoisseur of art, and a patron of literary and musical celebrities. I wondered if he thought I could surrender all this for the pleasure of becoming the wife of an unhonored minister! I think I must have startled him, somewhat, when I asked if he would not like to go to the Western Wilds, as a colporteur or a missionary to the Sandwich Islands with me as a tract distributor!

"He evinced no surprise, however, but calmly answered, 'certainly, if you wish it, I should be most happy in doing so!'

"Then, without realizing the extent of the wrong I was committing, or the sorrow I was heaping upon my own soul, I flew into a most violent rage. Snatching his ring from my finger, I threw it at him, exclaiming, 'take your property to one who believes as you do; I will share a divided love with no man!'

"All the brightness fled from his countenance, as he stooped, and raised the ring from the floor where it had fallen at his feet. He turned to me, and asked in the saddest tone, I think I ever heard, if I meant the words I had just uttered. He said he might be at fault in not considering the position I occupied; he had taken too much for granted, perhaps; if so, he was willing to make such concessions as I thought proper.

"I flippantly remarked, 'none are necessary! I have thought for some time that we were not suited for each other from a diversity of opinion, and now I am thoroughly

convinced of it!'

"I can never forget the tender words, in which he bade me farewell; they are impressed indellibly upon my memory. 'Violet,' he said, 'I am very sorry you have reached such a

decision; I have thought we were to spend our lives together, but find I have made a grievious mistake. I hoped we could be the means of accomplishing great good for the benefit of others by helping them to a higher plane of living. We might have done so much together; I always thought of you as my companion in every good work. Now, I find that is impossible; much that I would attempt must go, as I cannot work without your assistance. I shall try to bear this cross uncomplainingly. He knows what is best. You speak of a 'divided love,' not realizing that the new joy has illumined my life, making my love for you purer and deeper. I trust you may be happy in the coming years with the way you have chosen. Yours wil be a fairer lot than mine. You will be surrounded by dear ones, friends, and many others who will worship at your shrine of beauty; while I, a stranger in a foreign land, shall devote time and energy to the study of the truths of revelation. Keep this circlet of gold as a souvenir of our friendship, until some one more worthy than I shall give another in What my plans will now be for the future, I cannot say. You have my best wishes as though nothing had interposed. In parting, let me say, Violet, that if you ever weary of the brilliancy of life, in not finding it, as satisfactory as anticipated, you are welcome to your old place at my side. No one can ever fill it, but you, and it will always be in waiting for you. I think the nobleness of your nature will demand more than the glitter, glare, and pomp of this world; when that time comes, send for me, my poor struggling dove, and I will hasten to you, on the wings of love. Till then, I bid you a fond farewell, my heart's dearest love.'

"With these words, Alan Stuart left my presence, while I condescendingly bestowed a most gracious bow upon him, as though he were a mere stranger. Our dream of love was over. Paradise was lost. We were parted forever. And, yet, I would act in the same way again, if compelled. You see, it was a question of having my own way. I had,

never, been denied even a single wish, and could not see why I should sacrifice a year's happiness for a mere whim. I encountered, for the first time, one whose will was greater than mine, and with the strange anomaly of human nature, I chose to mar my own happiness rather than acknowledge it. Stranger still, the fact presented itself that my love was intensified by the trial. I had never loved Alan Stuart as I did at that time!

"Alan, I learned, sailed for Europe on the very steamer that we intended to take. He went directly to Germany, and took up a course of study, which required some five years to complete. What a blessing he must have found it, to be free from the care of a wife! I might have entertained his proposition if he had adhered to the plan of a year's travel, before commencing college work, and then allowed me to remain in London, or Paris, at the best houses. I could have entertained royally with a suitable companion, while he devoted himself to science. But to compel me to submit to the drudgery of practise for two years was simply absurd, and entirely out of the question. At the close of his studies he traveled through Egypt and the Holy Land for a year. Since that time, about four years I think, he has been settled over a small church somewhere in the vicinity of London. It is called Saint Julian, Saint Mark, or Saint Alan, I don't remember which. Once a year I receive some notice of his whereabouts; generally a newspaper, or circular, but never a word from him. I have taken care that he also is informed of my doings. A copy of 'Town Topics' is sent whenever there is an account concerning me. He was informed of the Morritons' removal to New York, and the opening of the mansion house; also, of my entrance into society, as one of its acknowledged leaders. I wonder if he imagines such brilliant conquests as I have achieved, could have been made in the reflected light of the Reverend Alan Stuart's wife!

"I have drained the cup of pleasure to its very dregs! Yet it has given neither satisfaction nor happiness! Only remorse! The greater the pain the deeper I have plunged to drown my sorrows, till life has become one dizzy whirl of endless gaiety! I have cried, 'soul take thine ease,' never dreaming that I should reap thorns from gilded brambles! I am weary of the fearful struggle, yet, I cannot, or will not stop. Perhaps Alan Stuart knew better than I, the needs of my soul, when he referred to this time; when I should not be content with the vanities of the world. True, it has come, yet I am not willing to acknowledge him, my mentor, or inform him, that like a stricken dove, I am

willing to fly to his ark of safety.

"An ordinary person would have become a prostrate victim to nerves; but a good physique has thus far stood me good service. I have been feeling unusually depressed of late; another anniversary is drawing near, and they are really the hardest of all to bear, when Mary's letter proved to be 'the last straw which broke the camel's back.' The tension of the nerves became strained to their utmost, and I was fearful of a collapse; yet I managed, after a fearful struggle to conceal everything under one of Bobby Burns' quotations. I mislead them all, I think, unless it was one, not far distant, who had a most penetrating intuition, kindred to that possessed by the one who has caused my life to become a failure.

"Bear with me, a little longer, Unie, dear, and I will cease. I have experienced a sort of misery-like company pleasure in knowing that he must have suffered also. The reason he does not return and carry out his philanthropic intentions, I think, is owing either to the old associations which still exist, or the statement made that he would wait till I summoned him. Certainly, if he waits till that day arrives he will never see his native shores again. As I would just as soon think of sending for 'the man in the moon,' as for him! Both are too absurd to contemplate. He is laboring among his brother men, I understand, without recompense. As he is sufficiently endowed with this world's goods, he considers it his bounden duty to assist those less

favored than himself. He has worked untiringly for the interests of the young men in every community where he has stopped; providing evening schools, reading rooms, and wholesome places of amusement. Yes, he has done, and is doing a most noble work, but I wish I could forget him, and thrust him out of my heart, and end this torturing anguish. I have tried to fill the place which he occupied, with another; but, all in vain; he is too firmly enshrined within my very life, to be dislodged.

"The great charm of this intended trip abroad, lay in the thought that I might know better what he had accomplished, and, unperceived, visit the scenes of his labors, and perchance obtain a glimpse of the minister himself. Should he obtain a knowledge of my visit, he would learn that I was

not afraid 'to beard the lion in his den'."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MISSING NOTE.

VIOLET sat at the close of the long, sad recital wondering what Unie would say to it all. She felt the secret satisfaction that having started upon her story, she had kept nothing back. She had opened, even, the hidden recesses of the heart, to another. Never before had she realized how dark and treacherous they were. She had kept them so securely fastened no ray of conscience could penetrate their gloom. And, now, when she had humiliated herself in spreading them out for inspection, she had not found them nearly as bad as she thought. She was somewhat puzzled, not considering that time smooths the "ragged"

edges of despair."

Unie sat wondering what she could say. She had been deeply interested in all the details of the exciting story, though surprised at the startling developments. She wished she might lead her sister out from the "sinking sands" of despair and remorse, to the sheltering Rock of faith. She was thinking just what she could say under the circumstances; how could she console Violet, without censuring Alan; how could she sympathize with Alan, without offending Violet? Truly her position as a judge was a very trying one. How could she be impartial and not become equivocal? She was weighing all the "pros and cons," most carefully when Violet upset the equilibrium of her scales of adjustment, and placed her back into the former state of uncertainty.

"Well, Unie, what do you think of this terrible weight of woe which I have carried all these years?" Violet asked, impatiently, scattering away every idea which had presented itself to the sister's mind. "Don't you think I quite equal Atlas in the endurance of bearing such a load?"

"O, Violet, I am so sorry for you!" cried Unie. "I am

sorry for you both!" she mournfully added. "What could

have possessed you to make you act in such a way."

"Then you consider that I am the one in the wrong!" said Violet. "Well, go on, my fair arbitrator, and set your accusations forth!"

"Excuse me, please, Violet," replied Unie. "If your way had not been wrong there would not have been so much unhappiness. You both have been miserable ever since. On the contrary, had your way been right, you both would have been happy for many years. Ten years which can never be recalled and lived over again! Ten years which have only brought an additional load of sorrow to each burdened heart, while they lengthened out the days of life!"

"Truly your reasoning is logical, though it condemns me. But it may be a necessary antidote, at this time," remarked Violet, surprised at her sister's acumen. "Continue, please, it may look differently under your representa-

tion."

"I did not mean to wound you," apologized Unie. "I was trying to arrange something pleasing when you scat-

tered all my bright thoughts to the winds."

"Then we are quits!" exclaimed Violet, with a ringing laugh. "It will be a novelty to hear the plain unvarnished truth instead of commendation. But, please, don't moralize, as I despise all that trash! It is not worth the breath one spends upon it, as it always opens a door for argument."

"Alan's fate, it seems to me, has been harder to bear than that of the most hardened criminal," continued Unie. "The vilest wretch who breaks all the commandments of the decalogue is not condemned unheard, while you have sentenced one whom you love to an exile's fate, without listening to one plea. He only asked a few months of pleasure to be sacrificed for the good of others; without hearing one word of defense, you ruthlessly broke the bond existing between you, and sacrificed both lives rather than yield. His sense of honor keeps him an outcast from his

old home. He will not return and pursue his work, lest the tongue of gossip should begin about you. I think, Violet, you have injured an innocent man. How you must have wounded him, when you said you would not 'share a divided love!'"

"Well! can you show me it was not?" asked Violet, anxiously, though she felt perfectly sure that this bulwark

of her opposition could not be overthrown.

"O, yes!" smilingly assented Unie. "I can tell you of a love, so wonderful, so mighty, so broad, and so deep that it is inexhaustible! Its vast treasury can never suffer depletion by the needs of the people, not even, if the whole earth were to draw on it at once. It has stood for all ages; before time itself began; and will endure beyond eternity. It is the great incomprehensible love of the Creator! It is the richest Gift a Father ever bestowed upon his children! This Love, a Gift from Divinity to humanity! He who possesses this treasure never feels any loss from sharing it with others. On the contrary, it increases by use! It is the perfect love of God, and cannot be divided! Do you understand my meaning? Or have I been too vague?"

"No, I do not!" replied Violet, "though it is no fault of yours. You have presented the subject as ably as any of the most noted divines. You are evidently better in-

formed than I, and speak from experience."

"Let me try to make it plainer for you," continued Unie, reassuringly. "Mamma loves us all; but, does she love any one less, because she gives her affection to all? If there were more, could she not love the others as much, without taking from our store? Do you comprehend?"

"Yes! I understand your meaning!" said Violet. "You have made it plain enough for the dullest comprehension, though I fail to see any analogy between the two. I cannot conceive of the attributes of a Supreme Being becoming incarnate. The difference between the two seems too vast to be spanned by any device of man, or any system of wisdom which might be termed religion, or divine revelation.

That which is so clear to you is an unfathomable mystery to me."

"O Violet! I am not able to discuss such abstruse questions!" cried Unie, in dismay. "They are utterly beyond me. I leave ethics to you and papa who are able to handle

them, I cannot."

"My dear sister!" said Violet, compassionately, "I would not ask you to wade into the deep waters of uncertainty; neither would I cause you to drift from your safe anchorage in life's treacherous sea. But, now, as the matter is under consideration, perhaps you might throw a little light upon it in your simple and childish way, which might enable me to see as you do. In the first place, if a wise God wished my love, why did He not create it, or put it into my heart? Why should I have to be told to do it by another? Love to parents is inherent, and why is it not to the Great Father?"

"Why, Violet, it is just the same! only you do not know it. It is the greater love which comes from 'Our Father,' that enables you to love us all. He has sown love in every heart. Some will not let it thrive, but try to choke it with the weeds of selfishness; others are not aware of its existence, as they have never allowed any trespassing on their premises. Some are very happy in learning its sweet truths, and spreading them forth to the 'weary and heavyladen;' while others are very unhappy in striving to drown the 'still small voice' which is ringing a plaintive melody in their souls. Ofttimes they have lulled it to rest, with the mazy rhythm of pleasure's fancy, thinking they had buried it in oblivion; but found themselves deceived, as it echoed taintly in their ears, through the silent watches of the night. It is always pleading with them, while they are ever striving to elude it. You see, it would not be necessary to tell people of this love, if they only listened to the little messenger implanted within their own hearts; but all do not, so it falls upon us to tell them."

"Your simple, beautiful and accurate illustrations

convince me that what you have so finely delineated must be true," said Violet, seriously. "You have described my condition better, even, than I could myself. How often have I awakened from a pleasant dream talking with Alan, to find it but a dream; a mockery, as it were, of my shattered hopes. Yes, I know, what you say must be true! Your life and mamma's exemplify your belief! Truly, you both are in unison with the teachings of the great Leader! while I, alas! am sadly out of tune!"

"But, dear sister, having discovered the missing note, which was necessary for the harmony of your life, you will sometime place it in its proper position, and join with grateful heart the grand symphony of a loving Father! I trust

some day you will do this," said Unie, confidently.

"Perhaps I may! Who knows! Though I have not your prophetic vision. But allowing that I should, I could never become Alan's wife; that is, as entirely beyond me as it was in the long ago. I shall never be suitable for such a position, and would not take it, if I were. He has clearly shown that he can exist without my assistance, and I would imitate him, by making no complaint. But I am weary of shams and deceptions, and desire a change. Why! I verily believe I am as great a fraud as Bee Moreland, whom I so utterly detest!" These words threw Violet into a burst of laughter, in which Unie joined from sympathy.

Violet's natural vein of humor restored the depressed spirits to their normal temperature. She laughed long and merrily, till all the shades of perplexity were driven away, and her countenance was wreathed with smiles. "Now!" she resumed, as her merriment subsided, "'Richard is himself again!' and we will return to the subject. As you have aided me so much in my secret sorrows, by pointing out a remedy, perhaps you might show a way out of this present chaos. What would you do, under the circumstances? Would you not abandon all idea of the trip, at present, as I am doing?" she asked, with eagerness.

"O, no!" quietly answered Unie. "I should consider

Mary's proposition, and try to accept it, out of deference to her wishes. You know she would suggest nothing im-

proper."

"Whew!" ejaculated Violet. "For persistency personified, commend me to one of the quiet, inoffensive ones! The proposition is preposterous, from my utter abhorence of the person mentioned! Do suggest something different, or at least palatable, lest I become a monomaniac on the subject of Bees!"

"I can think of nothing better than a visit to Mary," said Unie, seeing the surprised merriment twinkling in her sister's eyes. "You can arrange with her whatever you like. Possibly you might meet Mrs. Moreland there, and

change your opinion concerning her."

"The very thing!" agreed Violet. "I really believe you are more energetic than I am. You quietly plan something for action, while I inwardly rage at fate. I will start tomorrow with Lucy, for Mary's and answer her letter in person. There is no telling what may transpire before my return. I may go to Europe this year, after all. Who knows! I will go and inform mamma of my new intention, and return to a social little tea with you in this very room. Arrange whatever you like, and I shall be satisfied. 'Au revoir'," she cried, and departed with buoyant heart and step.

Violet went to her room and summoned her maid; she gave directions to have everything in readiness for an early start for the East on the following day. "I shall require you, Lucy, for the journey, not to assist me wholly, but more to help Mrs. Arthurs who is very busy preparing to leave home. See that John has the carriage in readiness

and ascertain the time of the trains."

Afterwards she informed Mrs. Morriton of the new arrangement. Although the mother was acquainted with the daughter's startling novelties she was surprised at such a statement just at this time, when Mary's letter had contained nothing which called for it.

Violet completed the arrangements in regard to the journey and stepped into her room to make a few changes in her toilet before returning to Unie. While doing so she thought of Alan's ring and wondered if it was bright after all these years. She unlocked a box of mementoes and took from it a tiny casket. She carefully untied the ribbon which held a tarnished gilt paper, unlocked the casket and raised from its velvet cushion the ring which she had placed there ten years before. Joy thrilled through every vein as she beheld, once more, its beautiful, sparkling purity. She glanced at the inscription; "Alan—Mizpah—Violet." She had forgotten that intervening word! "How strange!" she murmured. "Truly God has watched between us and Alan chose well, when he selected this. I will wear it, and it may prove a talisman and bring me happiness."

"What a beautiful new ring you have!" Unie remarked,

as they sat chatting over the impromptu tea.

"Yes, isn't it lovely!" assented Violet. "It is one I found among my treasures! See! It has a very touching inscription!" She drew the beautiful solitaire from her finger, and placed it in her sister's hand, for inspection.

"O Violet!" exclaimed Unie as she read the significant word between the names of the two loved ones, "how happy you must feel in finding it again! I am happy in seeing that you have restored it to its proper place and trust you may never lose it again! It certainly will insure happiness!"

Unie saw that Violet's feet were entering upon a new path, and offered a silent prayer: "May He who notes 'the sparrow's fall,' aid this dear one to see that life's missing note is the key-note of all true happiness and love!"

CHAPTER XIX.

VIOLET'S FIRST OPPORTUNITY.

THE next day, Violet, accompanied by Lucy, took the noon express for Boston. The exhilarating air of the beautiful day was thoroughly appreciated by the happy maiden. She felt in accord with nature.

"What a delicious day!" she exclaimed, as they were rushing along through the charming country. "How lovely the trees appear with their new Spring robes! See how the soft, mellow tints of emerald have covered the hills and fields! Why the balmy air reminds one of an early Summer day! I never saw such an exquisite day this time of the year, did you?"

"O, yes!" calmly answered Lucy. "Yesterday was

just as beautiful as to-day; only a little milder."

"Yesterday!" repeated Violet. "I don't think I remember anything about it! That is, in regard to the weather!"

Lucy had provided several of the leading magazines of the day that the tediousness of the journey might be relieved. Violet, although very fond of travel, considered it tiresome and disagreeable, and always availed herself of every measure to while away the time. Usually she spent the hours in reading.

But in this instance she had no desire to indulge in her favorite pastime. The train of thought started in Unie's room some twenty hours before, had not reached its destination. It was one of those inward trains which run independently of time-tables; whose velocity increases or diminishes at the option of the operator. They excel in manner of locomotion, any invention of man, either by steam, electricity, or condensed air. They penetrate alike, the wooded glen, and sweep over the eagle's home on highest crag in perfect safety. They cross the ocean's vast expanse

to distant climes, and return like magic. One may linger at any station, according to his own sweet will and the train awaits his pleasure. No tracks are necessary for their course; they simply follow the flights of the imagination, having a "special permit" from the Great Master. They go to and fro, through all the days of life, and complete a circuit of happiness, or unhappiness, as the case may be; one of happiness, if the heart beats in unison with the natural laws; but, on the contrary, one of wretchedness and disaster, if the heart chafes at opposition, and rushes rapidly to its own destruction.

On the preceding day, while Violet was taking this strange mental journey, she noticed a small station called Opportunity. Intent upon investigation, she stopped, and while there, learned the sweet truth, that doing good unto others was the better way to cure one's sorrows. To-day, while being borne along by the "iron-horse," the mind had taken unperceived, the same route, and tarried at the little place.

On and on, the outward train, with its warning and reverberating whistle, whizzed over the polished rails, powerless to arrest her attention.

"Strange!" she mused, "that I have always missed this

refreshing retreat! I must know more of it!"

Selfishness had been Violet's dominant note. The praise, and adulation of society had strengthened and nourished the trait so zealously that it had become the leading element of her existence. It had been the "one thing desired above all others!" Life had been so completely filled with her own anticipations of pleasure, that she had no room to think of others; self, like a tyrant, had seized every avenue of the heart, and guarded it from any intrusion, with an iron monopoly.

Unie's suggestions had made an innovation in the closed passages, and opened them to the light. Violet was undergoing a new experience. The former disinterestedness was yielding to the precepts of the golden rule. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." These inspired words were soothing the inquiring

heart. A novel sensation was stealing through the awakened faculties, and she amused herself with the indulgence. She found it satisfactory and permanent; in contrast to the evanescence of former pursuits. The memory of the emotions was sweet, instead of bitter, and they shone in resplendent beauty upon the fair brow, as a landscape mirrored upon the placid waters of a lake.

"How is your sister, Lucy? Is she improving? If I remember, correctly, you said she had been quite poorly. Is there any recent news?" asked Violet, noticing that her companion sat absently holding a magazine without open-

ing it.

"Yes, I received a letter from her a short time ago; but

it was not very encouraging;" sadly answered Lucy.

"I am sorry for you both! Tell me all about it, and, perhaps, we can suggest something that may help her,"

said Violet sympathetically.

"I would like to, if I do not weary you. Fannie has had a severe attack of LaGrippe. The physician thinks it was caused from over-work and mental anxiety; but that sufficient rest will restore her. He says, she ought not to resume study of any kind, before Fall. She is able to sit up, now, though not strong enough for exercise on account of the weariness of which she continually complains.

"What has made her work so hard? Was it necessary?"

asked Violet, greatly interested.

"She is extremely fond of art, and hopes to make it a profession. She has studied very hard for the past seven years without any rest. She took a four years' course at the Seminary, and, while there developed a talent for drawing, and decided to devote all her energies to the pursuit of it. She has been attending the Normal Art School, three years, and has made rapid progress. I hear from others that she has done some excellent work. The term closes in the early Summer, and Fannie thought she could easily make up the time lost in sickness, if she was permitted to resume her studies, at once. She seems discouraged at

the lack of strength and the physician's verdict. She has been offered the position of teacher when the Fall term commences but is fearful she cannot accept it on account of this sickness."

"I think we may be able to help her," interposed Violet. "She can make you a visit and remain all summer if she wishes. You know Aunt Lida's passion for nursing, so your sister would be well-cared for through the trying stage of recovery. I feel confident the change will do her good. After we are settled at Mrs. Arthurs' you might take a little trip home, and tell her of the plan. If it meets with approval, you can take her back to Unie and Aunt Lida, and remain a few days till she becomes acquainted. Tell your sister that she will confer a favor upon me, if she accepts my invitation. Unie is lonely, now, without Elva, and I am generally so busy that sometimes I am afraid she must feel neglected. Fannie might, for a time, fill the gap. I hope she can be persuaded to make a good long visit to Morriton House. Perhaps her sickness has used all the provisions made for a rainy day, and she needs a few little things; so I will send a trifling gift, which I trust may be requisite for everything."

Violet took several bills from her portemonnaie, placed them with one of her cards, in an envelope, and handed it to Lucy. "If she should need more than I have provided let me know, and I will most cheerfully give it," added Violet. "Don't let her consider herself my debtor, as she can make all the sketches she chooses for Unie's 'Lotus

Leaves."

"Oh, Miss Morriton, how can I ever repay you for such great kindness!" cried Lucy, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Fannie will appreciate your magnanimous offer, I

can assure you."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Violet. "Remember there is no obligation! If we were to measure values, I realize I should be the gainer. I had proposed to help Unie this Summer, if possible, but I little thought that the promise

would be fulfilled in this manner. However, I am delighted

to keep it by proxy, it can be done so much better."

Violet had seized the first opportunity which had presented itself; that of doing good unto others. She felt a secret thrill of pleasure steal through the heart at the knowledge that she could render assistance to others. The same generous characteristic predominated with her, as with Harry. Whatever they did, they represented themselves as the recipients, rather than the benefactors.

"Newton!" shouted the conductor; the train stopped; some went out; others came in and filled their places; "this train is express for Boston," he added, and it started

again upon its course.

"I had no idea we were so near our destination!" said Violet. "I never knew the trip to seem so short before. It has been delightful, and must be owing to your entertainment. I must have your company, Lucy, in traveling,

you are so interesting.

"Thank you," answered Lucy. "I was thinking the same in regard to you. I know I have greatly enjoyed the ride, and attributed the pleasure to your kind interest, and noble benevolence towards Fannie. Indeed, I was feeling down-hearted, and discouraged, when you came to my assistance and drove away the morbidness. I am more grateful to you than I know how to express."

"It seems, then, as though we have been mutual benefactors," assented Violet considerately. "I see we shall not have time to stop at the hotel; we will take a coach across the city to the station, lunch there, and be in season for the next train to Oakhurst. What a surprise it will be

to Mary to see us!"

CHAPTER XX.

MARY ARTHURS.

OAKHURST was the home of the Arthurs. It was situated in one of Boston's fairest suburbs, a small town of hills and dales. It derived its name from the grand old oaks which stood on guard like giant sentinels, with their strong, protecting arms. Its grounds were quite extensive, covering nearly ten acres. Broad avenues bordered with maples, sycamores, horse-chestnuts and firs, wound in and out, to all parts. They led to an adjoining park, where one could wander for hours amid sylvan glories, and enjoy the natural beauties of wood and stream, free from the busy hum of manufacture.

The mansion stood upon a pleasant knoll facing the east. It was a beautiful structure, and partook of the old colonial style of architecture. The eastern outlook was upon a sloping lawn, smooth and soft as emerald velvet. It was dotted here and there with ornamental shrubs, each laden with the brilliant blossoms of its season. A large grapery bearing the choice Black Hamburg stood in the northern part of the grounds. On the southern slope adjoining the lawn, lay the lovely gardens, with their hedges of arborvitæ, and spruce; beyond these were shady groves of oak and elm, interspersed with walnut and cedar. Barns and outhouses stood some distance away, at the west.

The family at Oakhurst numbered four. Doctor Harlow Arthurs, the father, Mary Arthurs, the mother, and two young maidens just budding into womanhood: Ruth, the elder, and Hilda some four years younger. It was a happy household; an ideal home that is so seldom realized; a

paradise upon earth.

Harlow Arthurs was an eminent physician. He was the son of a physician, and early trained in therapeutics. He graduated from one of the best New England Medical

Colleges, and shortly afterwards gave his services to his country, during the War of the Rebellion. At its close, he commenced life with his charming wife, in a neighboring town where he remained only a short time; removing to the bustling little town where he had made a permanent residence.

Dr. Arthurs was small in stature, though very energetic. His keen gray eyes bespoke sound judgment and deep penetration. A full forehead showed wisdom and language, while a finely chiseled chin, with firm mouth gave evidence of marked individuality, which could not be swerved from the principles of faith and justice, or anything contrary to

the possessor's well-seasoned investigations.

Dr. Arthurs had a large practice, not only in his immediate vicinity, but in the neighboring towns. His superior skill in surgery had gained him a far-famed reputation. He was frequently desired in consultation upon critical cases. He possessed that rare trait of cheerfulness, and vivacity of manner, and sympathy for the patient, which aids so much in recovery; a virtue often lacking among the medical fraternity. Nothwithstanding, sympathetic nursing is as important a factor in the restoration to health as the pharmaceutical remedies of the materia medica.

Mary Arthurs was a woman of the most estimable virtues. She had the fair complexion of a blonde, and a wondrous wealth of soft, golden hair. Her mild blue eyes beamed with tender compassion. In their liquid depths, one caught the radiant gleams of a sunny, cheerful disposition. The countenance was always wreathed in smiles, in her thoughtfulness for others. Her words were as "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

She was the leading spirit at Oakhurst. The guardian angel of the household. Yet, no one was conscious of her gentle sway, or felt any tiresome demands. She ruled by love; that "perfect love which casteth out all fear." All who came within the circle of her acquaintance were benefited. They recognized the sweet, gentle sympathy of their

benefactor.

She was favored with a fair portion of this world's goods, and she willingly shared it with the needy. The poor, heavy-burdened laborer felt his load grow lighter from her timely assistance. The hungry were never turned from the door empty-handed. No appeal was ever made in vain to her. "What can I do to help them?" was the question she asked herself, whenever she heard of those in distress. And she answered it in a silent, unobtrusive manner.

Her life was like a tranquil Summer's day; clear and bright, without a cloud across its horizon; and sweet with the scent of opening flowers stealing through the balmy air. She walked a shining path, brightening the shadows

with fragrant deeds of kindness.

Her heart beat in unison with the Father's wondrous works. Its vibrating chords resounded in soothing pianissimo, like the dulcet melody of a rare old song. A deep, rich minor strain of inexpressible tenderness ran through all its measures. The spiritual and the physical were in consonance with each other. Nature responded to the rhythm of the soul, making a perfect harmony. She was in tune. That happy state of existence, which lies within the reach of every one, but, which can only be reached through self-sacrifice.

One might easily gain a conception of our mother Eve, when she stood in Paradise, as the last crowning act of

creation, from the life of Mary Arthurs.

She was a true helpmeet to her husband; she kept watch over all his interests, and aided him by her gentle ministrations. She was the last to note his departure upon professional visits, and the first to welcome his return with a smile. This pleasing little remembrance was always observed, and tenderly appreciated by the recipient. Many things which ordinarily are left to the care of servants, came under her supervision thereby adding to the comforts of the household. She always kept the lamp trimmed, and burning in the Doctor's office. It was her wise forethought which sent its ruddy glow out into the night, as a beacon, to the passer-by.

the knowledge so carefully, and illustrated it so beautifully, though unconsciously, by his own life, that it touched a responsive chord in the daughter's heart, causing it to vibrate in unison.

Reader, the sketch of Mary Arthurs is not an ideal one. It is no exaggerated fancy of the author's imagination; only, a very faint representation of a true and noble woman. But mind nor pen can no more do justice to her many virtues, than the shadow can show the reality of the object whose form it borrows! Each only dimly reflects the original.

CHAPTER XXI.

"ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER."

It was early in the evening at Oakhurst. The Doctor, after a long, busy day was enjoying a pleasant pastime with the family. The light from the office shed its cheering rays upon the "shades of night," telling of warmth and happiness within.

Father, mother and daughters were indulging in the social game of halma; a simple little game, yet fascinating and

exciting from its unexpected leaps.

"I hope, papa, you will not be obliged to go out again this evening!" exclaimed Ruth. "We will try to make you

forget all weariness, if we can only keep you."

"I echo your sentiments, my dear," said the Doctor, "and appreciate your sympathy; but, you know a physician's life is one of 'duty before pleasure,' so I must hold myself in readiness for any emergency. Still, that will not prevent our present happiness, and we will make the most of the passing moments in spite of the uncertain," he added, seeing the troubled look upon her brow.

"After we finish our game, I know Hilda will contribute to our entertainment by a few musical selections," said Mrs.

Arthurs.

Hilda readily acquiesced in the proposed arrangement,

and the moments fled away freighted with happiness.

The mother paused a second to watch one of the cross and crisscross movements of Hilda, when an outer sound arrested her attention. "I think I hear a carriage coming

up the avenue," she remarked.

Each listened, but could detect nothing only a faint rumbling in the distance, which they attributed to a passing vehicle on the highway. The game was resumed, though the trained ear of the mother could not be deceived. She had watched so often, the ear was keen, and extremely alert to much that passed unnoticed by her companions.

Shortly afterwards, carriage wheels were heard, beside the veranda, giving evidence of the mother's accuracy. A jingling peal of the bell went echoing through the house

interrupting on its way the engrossing little game.

"Let me see the disturber of our peace!" cried Ruth eagerly. "It can't be any one to see you, papa, coming in a carriage, can it?" Without waiting for an answer, she rushed from the room, leaving the others as curious as she was, though not so impatient.

Quickly opening the door she perceived two ladies coming towards her. Her astonishment increased rather than diminished, when the larger one advanced, grasped her in her arms, and hastily imprinted a kiss upon her brow, exclaiming, "Why, Ruth, aren't you glad to see me?"

"Glad!" repeated Ruth; "I am simply delighted to see you, Aunt Violet! But you gave me such a surprise that you nearly took away my senses! Do come and surprise

the waiting trio in the office."

"Excuse me, please, for interrupting this family quartet in such an unceremonious manner! Do not let me delay the social game which I see you have been indulging in," said Violet Morriton, as she passed through the doorway, and entered the room with as much ease as though she had been an inmate of Oakhurst for weeks, instead of moments.

"Why, Vi, dear, where did you come from?" cried Mrs. Arthurs. "Let me take your wraps, and make you comfortable in this easy-chair. I am delighted to see you, and most agreeably surprised. I wonder if you could have

received my letter, though I hardly think it possible."

Violet keenly enjoyed the situation, secretly amused at the bewildered look resting upon Mrs. Arthurs' countenance. "I will relieve your anxiety, Mary, by informing you that I came directly from home; also, that I received your voluminous epistle which I thought I could answer better in person, than by writing. So, here I am, at Unie's suggestion."

"If you had telegraphed me I would have met you in town, and lessened the monotony of the journey a trifle,"

said Mrs. Arthurs, always careful concerning the welfare of her guests. "But what did you think of the suggestion in regard to the journey? Does my proposition meet your

approval?"

"We will let the journey and everything relating to it rest until tomorrow; then, we will fully analyze all its bearings, as I came solely for that purpose," said Violet. "Your pity, however, as regards the 'monotony' of travel, I do not deserve, as I never spent a more agreeable day in the cars, in my life, thanks to my devoted companion, Lucy Bradley. That reminds me, she must feel neglected at my leaving her, a perfect stranger to the house, alone, so long."

"She is becoming settled by this time, I can assure you," said Ruth. "I told Selma to lead her to your room, when you came in to see mamma, so you need have no fears for her loneliness." Ruth felt amply rewarded for her forethought as she caught the smile of

approval from her mother.

Mrs. Arthurs could hardly refrain from staring at Violet Morriton. She was fascinated by the expression which caused the countenance to almost beam. She knew that Violet had undergone some change since she last met her; it was of pleasing import, she judged from the animated spirit which appeared to have taken possession of the radiant maiden. "I wonder if it is anything connected with Alan Stuart," she mused. "Violet either wears his ring or another's in its place, I feel convinced. "Whichever it is, she is happier than she has been for years. She seems to have strayed back to childhood and returned laden with its joys and anticipations. The bright glow of hope has intensified her marvellous beauty, making it as wondrous as a Venus from the hand of an ancient sculptor."

The evening passed swiftly by. "Why does time fly so fast, when we are happy?" asked Hilda, as Mrs. Arthurs suggested that the pleasant party had better separate till morning as it was growing so late. "When we are unhappy and wish it away, it simply drags! I wonder why it is!"

"A question which has often presented itself to older heads than yours, and one which the years will solve for you; I might truthfully say, almost before you wish, my dear," answered the father, gazing fondly upon her.

On the following morning after the domestic duties were turned into their accustomed grooves, Mrs. Arthurs and

Violet seated themselves for a cozy chat.

"I am so glad, Vi, that you are not disturbed over the unavoidable change," remarked Mrs. Arthurs, taking a tray-cloth from her work-basket, and beginning to trace the outlines.

"Why, Mary, have you not learned that 'appearances are deceitful?" retorted Violet. "You should have seen me yesterday, when I received your letter. I was like a minature ocean in a gale; disappointment surged through the heart like breakers upon a rocky coast. I concealed it, with Spartan bravery from all, except Unie. She, poor child, saw through my flimsy subterfuge, and suggested a better way; so, here I am, at your service, with Lucy as accessory. You will find her of valuable service, as she is very skilful with the needle; I thought she might be needed in the hurried preparations for leaving home."

"Thanks, dear Vi, I appreciate your kindness, and shall certainly call upon Lucy to aid. But, it grieves me greatly to disappoint you, just at the last moment, and I wish it could be otherwise. Yet, you have come at a most apportune moment. It is providential. I am expecting Mrs. Moreland to visit me shortly, and remain a few days. see, Vi, dear, that an unforeseen opportunity will present itself. If you wish, you can consult her yourself and make any arrangement you think best. How fortunate it is!" said Mrs. Arthurs, a smile of satisfaction stealing over her face.

Violet leaned back in her chair convulsed with laughter. "'Providential!" she reiterated; "what you can see 'providential,' in any such arrangement completely baffles me! 'Providential' for me to fellowship Bee Moreland! It is as absurd as it is impracticable! I never aspired to be an apiarist, and become acquainted with the habits of the insect model. Yet, in deference to your wishes, I will not shrink from the impending affliction, but remain and watch the wary creature," she added, hoping to relieve Mrs. Arthurs from all anxiety.

"Thank you, Vi, for the decision. I am confident it can be arranged, with satisfaction to both," she said, bend-

ing over a rose-petal.

"How strange it is, that I am to encounter the very person whom I have avoided, so many years! If I did not know to the contrary, I should say that you and Unie had led me into an ambush; but, as I came voluntarily, I see no intrigue. Your minds run in the same channel, and, from a psychological standpoint, it may be interesting to study the result of this event, and determine how far co-operative influence extends; though I must admit that I do not desire to be a passive subject, acting under another's will," asserted Violet.

While Mrs. Arthurs and Violet were engaged in discussing the future, Ruth and Hilda were busy in completing the arrangements for an evening reception. Lucy's proffered aid had been kindly accepted; she decorated the drawing room most artistically with asparagus ferns and carnation

pinks.

"It looks awfully sweet," said Ruth; "just like a fairy's bower. You are such a treasure, Lucy, perhaps you might add to our programme. I have already invited Aunt Violet to favor us with a few selections, and she has consented. Now, if you could give a little variation, it would be just too nice for anything; wouldn't it, Hilda?" Without perceiving Hilda's nod of assent, she continued, "Do you sing or play, or do anything out of the ordinary?"

"O, no, Miss Arthurs!" replied Lucy. "I neither sing nor play. I am only a common-place individual, with no special talent. Sometimes I have read in our country exhibitions, simply to fill out. Sister Fannie thinks I should attend the School of Oratory and speaks of great possibilities, when her 'ship comes in.' But I have no faith in such visions, as it is beyond the reach of the Bradley family," added Lucy, with a sigh.

"Fannie Bradley!" exclaimed Hilda. "Did your sister Fannie attend Wellesley? Does she live in Connecticut? And did you ever hear her speak of Hilda Arthurs? Tell

me! I wonder if it is my Fannie Bradley!"

"I think I may safely answer all your questions in the affirmative, Miss Arthurs," answered Lucy, smilingly. "Fannie has told us all about you, and her pleasant visit at Oakhurst for a few days. I had forgotten the name

until your questions recalled the incident."

"Dear, little Fannie, how neglected she must feel!" ejaculated Hilda. "I have entirely allowed her to drop from my life during the last three years! The poor dear! "While abroad, I was so engrossed with study that I had no correspondence outside of home. And Fannie is so proud, I know she would not advance one step, for fear of intrusion. I will make amends for neglect at the first opportunity. You must tell me everything concerning her, later on. I know you will not only confer a favor, but honor us, by taking a part, if she indorses you. Now, what will you favor us with?"

"Anything which you may desire, if Miss Morriton consents. She may not wish her companion to participate

in the same entertainment that she does," said Lucy.

"Do not fear," said Hilda. "I will ascertain at once, and let you know. I see pride is a family characteristic of the Bradleys. You and Ruth can be making a selection,

during my absence."

Hilda soon returned, and reported that Aunt Violet was delighted to know that she had a companion who possessed such a talent and promised herself much pleasure in her 'at homes,' in the future. "Now, Lucy, what have you and Ruth decided upon?" she asked. "Is it pathetic, dramatic, or comical?"

'We never mentioned the subject during your absence," frankly admitted Ruth. "I kept Lucy busy answering questions about her home and surroundings. We can

decide better, I should judge, with you."

"Allow me to suggest," said Lucy modestly. "For a parlor entertainment, something pathetic would be appropriate. I could give the 'Rock of Ages,' or the 'Last Hymn;' either of which is made quite effective with a piano obligato. It is immaterial to me; and if such a thing as an encore were required, something mirthful would not be out of place, like 'Aunt Jerusha's visit to the theatre."

"Then let it be 'The Last Hymn,'" said Hilda. "It is mamma's favorite; we will surprise her to-night with it. Ruth can accompany you, as she has less to do than I have. You had better rehearse a little, and I will see that no one

interrupts."

"Mamma, do you remember sweet, little Fannie Brad-

ley?" asked Hilda, as she entered the room.

"Certainly I do!" responded Mrs. Arthurs. "Why do you ask, when you know that I could never forget one of my favorites! I was wondering quite recently what had become of her."

"Lucy accidently mentioned that she was her sister," replied Hilda. Imagine my surprise. I wanted to ask her all about Fannie, then, but refrained, we were so busy about the evening's entertainment."

"Well, Hilda, there is an old saying, 'One good turn deserves another;' perhaps I can turn about and give you the necessary information concerning your friend," said

Violet.

"On our way here, Lucy, at my invitation, gave a full account of her sister's life which I will give you, as nearly as I can." She related the incidents which had been furnished, accurately; and mother and daughter expressed their sympathy at Fannie's misfortune. "Perhaps," she concluded, "I have done wrong in sending her anything like money, as there is so much independence in the family.

Though she may be induced to retain it, as I represented it as an equivalent in lieu of certain pictures, which she was to execute for me. I did not wish her to be indebted to me, for I despise anything pertaining to it."

"How thoughtful you were, Aunt Violet. A kindness to Fannie is like one bestowed upon me," said Hilda. "Do you think it would do mamma, for me to pay her a short

visit when Lucy goes?"

"Certainly, my dear!" assented the mother. "It may prove beneficial, in her present condition. You have many long-standing invitations, and understand perfectly the situation of the Bradleys."

"It appears, Violet, as though you had been 'entertaining an angel unawares," said Mrs. Arthurs, turning to her friend, "or had been acting unconsciously the part of the

good Samaritan."

"Whichever way it is," remarked Hilda, "I realize that Ruth and I are the ones most favored; we have received

two fine acquisitions for our 'at home."

"I coincide with your sentiments, as far as they relate to your appropriation. The other part remains to be proven. You certainly showed wisdom in securing us at once, and I trust we may not mar the evening's pleasure, with a false note. What a pity the 'Busy Bee' is not here to give a brilliant rendition of the love-sick damsel!" said Violet sarcastically.

"Bees don't sing, do they, Aunt Violet?" asked Hilda, with innocent mirth. "I have never heard them do any-

thing beyond a buzz!"

"Excuse me, please, Mary," said Violet apologetically. "The Bee to whom I refer does, or did once upon a time."

"Whom do you mean?" she queried. "Mrs. Moreland? I can promise you that if she should arrive before the

last moment, I certainly shall press her into service."

"You perceive my meaning, and will note that she is not only one of the buzzing Bees, but one of humming kind. Invite her to sing, by all means, as it may prevent her from

whizzing around into my affairs. Pardon my satire, Mary. I will not corrupt Hilda with my dislikes."

The unexpected always takes us by surprise. The family were partaking of an early tea, when Mrs. Moreland

arrived, causing great confusion.

As soon as the commotion attending her arrival had subsided, she turned to greet the members of the household. "Dear Mary, how delighted I am to see you! How well you are looking!" she exclaimed, kissing her. "You dear girls, how sweet you are," giving each a little kiss. Turning to the father, she cried, "And you, dear Doctor, how glad I am to see you;" she paused lest she might in her enthusiastic greeting, bestow the impressive salutation which she had given to the others.

"O, excuse me, Violet, I did not notice you before!" she said, extending her hand, for a friendly clasp. She stood somewhat in awe of Violet Morriton, and did not

dare to proffer a caress, lest it might be refused.

The evening's entertainment was one of great success. The additional numbers contributed much to the already excellent programme. Miss Morriton gave several selections with much favor. Mrs. Moreland sang very acceptably, though a little affected. But, Lucy Bradley fairly carried her audience by storm. She read not only one piece, but four in order to satisfy her hearers. The "Last Hymn" for the first selection was received so enthusiastically, she was obliged respond with an encore. The same reception greeted her second appearance. The sweet little lady, with her versatile powers, became a great favorite with the whole company.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HAND OF FATE.

VIOLET MORRITON awoke the next morning, after a restless night. "Strange!" she mused, "that I should meet Bee Moreland, after so many years! It seems as though the hand of fate had planned it; resentment is useless I must submit and make the best of it. There is one consolation, however, 'forewarned is forearmed,' so I shall have no fears. Still I must always be on guard, lest she catches me off duty. I cannot help the feeling that I am always in the presence of a cat, when I am near her. She looks so innocent and harmless, lying like a cherished kitten, sleek and smooth, softly purring with her head upon her velvet paws. A perfect type of contentment, till some unwary object comes near when sharp claws protrude from the soft cushions, and seize its victim, without even a change of position. All the time, you will find that it has been deceiving you; though apparently absorbed, it was watchful of everything passing by, or even going on. In spite of Mary's defense I cannot rid myself of the simile. I think I will keep on the defensive and be prepared for any attack from her. How absurd to imagine that I could ever take her for a confidant. I think I will study her, in the new role of widowhood; it may prove intensely interesting."

The faithful old clock in the hall rang out the morning hours with seven distinct strokes, interrupting Violet's reverie; she saw that she must arise, at once, to be in readiness for breakfast. Hurrying through her preparations she joined the family incased with an unpenetrable armor which she felt could neither be pierced by the curiosity of

friends nor the strategy of foes.

Mrs. Moreland had been similarly occupied during her wakeful moments. She had been holding sweet communion with self. It was a pleasing occupation, but, at this

time, it proved to be more interesting than usual. Violet Morriton was the subject under consideration. She was in such a deep study that a little frown had crept stealthily upon the brow, when the grim sentry of time, warning of the passing hours, put an end to her cogitations.

Bounding from the couch, she ran eagerly to the mirror to see if the frown had left its impress upon her forehead. She found no wrinkle after a most vigorous search, but for fear that it might make its appearance when not desired, she carefully massaged the face, bestowing several soft,

smoothing pats upon the brow.

Mrs. Moreland had learned a valuable lesson from consulting her mirror. She learned that frowns, not only disfigured the features for the time being, but marred their beauty afterwards, by leaving wrinkles. Accordingly, she kept the closest vigilance over herself and prohibited these unwelcomed notes of time from intruding upon her domains. She learned that "self-preservation was the first law of nature," and mapped out her whole life upon that knowledge. She cultivated a sweet and cheerful disposition, as the best means of retaining her good looks. Being naturally of a quick and irritable temper, she had found it difficult at first, to preserve an even manner. But as time passed on, she reached the desired goal, in spite of the unworthy motive. She was wiser than her many friends, who knew the truth, but did not consider it of sufficient importance to heed.

The persistent discipline which Mrs. Moreland exercised moulded her character so effectively that she was spoken of as "one of the most charming ladies." She had reached a happy quiescent state, and was considered one of society's beauties and favorites.

The meeting with Violet Morriton had awakened memories of the former years, when she had refused all the kindly offers of friendship. Now, she felt that although the times were changed, she should never succeed in gaining her confidence. She was satisfied that Violet had seen through

her youthful attempts to gain favor, and would attribute any present advances to the same source. "So," she mused, while dressing, "I will not make any; I will wait for an opportunity; if one comes, I shall not hesitate to take it, even if it chills me, as much as the majestic maiden herself does. Imagine calling such a splendid woman, as she is, 'Violet!' How absurd!" Beatrice laughed at her own amusement, and like Violet, joined the family with the same intention.

"Violet!" said Mrs. Arthurs rising from the breakfast table, I wish you and Beatrice would consider yourselves at liberty to roam about wherever you choose. Ruth and I will be engaged a short time this morning, and will join you later on, in the library."

Hilda took the ladies to the library and entertained them with a fine collection of pictures which she had secured when in Europe. Violet was greatly interested in the German building which possessed such marvellous preserving

powers.

"It seems to come from certain conditions of the earth and atmosphere in that section," said Beatrice. "Mortimer, Mother Moreland and I visited there many times, when we were in the city. The strangest things, to me, were the little canaries in their cages. They looked so lifelike, I should not have been surprised if they had hopped about and poured out a flood of melody!"

"Were you there long, Beatrice?" inquired Violet.

"O, yes!" eagerly replied Beatrice. "We were in that vicinity three or four months. You see Mort and his mother did not care to rush about in traveling. When we found a pleasant and agreeable place, we made quite a sojourn there; studied the customs of the people, their history, authentic and legendary. Mort was—But, excuse me, I will not bore you, with the Moreland peculiarities."

"Do continue!" pleaded Hilda. "How nice it must have been for you to remain as long as you wished in a place. I was only allowed one day in this quaint old

mysterious place. I was so closely engaged with my studies

that I had very little time for recreation."

"So was I," asserted Beatrice with a solemn air. "I was studying, also, but, I had plenty of time for recreation, and stumbled upon many interesting things." She stopped as she saw the smile of incredulity flitting across the faces of her listeners.

"Please explain yourself, Bee," said Violet. "I thought you were spending your honeymoon in Europe, not learning

the languages."

"Yes, I was," responded Beatrice ambiguously. "I was doing both. My husband was always a student. That is, he spent a portion of each day among his books. Through his kindness and loving care, I became interested, and look upon those hours spent in study, as some of the happiest in my whole life." Mrs. Moreland seemed lost in a pleasant meditation, a few moments. A bright smile illumined her

countenance, making it radiant with reflective joy.

Violet and Hilda noticed her meditative mood, and waited patiently for her to resume the fascinating story. "How strange!" thought Violet, "that she can speak so calmly of one whom she loved so well! What an anomaly she is! One would think she had no heart, when she speaks of 'Mort,' so naturally, and yet, her very soul seems satisfied with the brightness of his memories. How impossible it would be for me to make the object of my departed joys a subject for a morning's conversation! However, it is consoling to find her not as rattle-headed as I, at first, imagined. What a task the Benedict must have undertaken! Yet, I find, even myself interested in spite of prejudice."

Beatrice, in the midst of her reflections, almost unconsciously began watching Violet. "What a superb woman she is!" she mused. What a pity she never married! I wonder why the engagement with Alan Stuart was broken! She still wears his ring, I am sure, after all these years, so she must care for him. Perhaps, I may be the means of

bringing them together again! "Who knows! One thing, I will be very careful not to disclose the relationship existing between Mort and Alan." She laughed aloud in the exuberance of her joy over the secret, and meeting the inquiring

looks, continued her story.

"You see, my ignorance began to dawn upon Mort shortly after our marriage. I was reading aloud to his mother one morning when I completely tripped over a common French phrase. I gave it such an outrageous pronunciation, that it nearly convulsed me. Mort was writing, but he had heard the mistake, and joined in our merriment. We were on board the steamer, on our bridal trip, bound for Europe. Mother Moreland wished to remain with friends during our absence, but we would not allow it. Why I never would have known her son, if it had not been for her! Everyone loved her! I don't think I could have loved Mort if he had not loved his mother so much. He had watched over her welfare, since his father's death, and I had no intention of interrupting their happiness. Accordingly, she accompanied us, and I flatter myself that I added just a mite to their enjoyment, while they lived. How sad, they could not remain, when we were all so happy. Pardon my digression, I will try to make amends. As soon as the laugh over my egregious mistake had died away, Mort looked at me and remarked, 'I see, Bee, your French has become a little rusty, not only in tone but in quantity!'

"'It has,' I replied; 'what would you advise me to do about it?' I innocently asked, little dreaming what the

question would bring forth.

"'Just brighten it up a little, with my assistance,' he answered, as delighted as though he had found some rare

pearl amid the shallows of my education.

"I was startled greatly over the suggestion, till I found that he only wished me to read and converse a little while with him, each morning. I found it very fascinating, and soon fell into his manner of speaking a pure Parisian French. Learning of my ignorance of the German language, he I demurred at first, as I thought I could never learn to like the harsh, guttural sounds. Mort told me I would not find them so, when I had mastered the language. I consented to the plan, and found it as he had said, sweet and agreeable. We were free from sea-sickness, and had much time at our disposal. By the time we reached the other side, I knew enough of both languages to speak them, moderately, if not fluently.

"I had always supposed that wealthy people could do just what they chose, till Mort informed me to the contrary. He said that being rich gave him greater responsibilities; he had large philanthropical ideas for mankind, and interested himself in every good work within his vicinity, saying it was our bounden duty to assist the weary and lighten

their heavy burdens.

"Sometime, I would like to tell you how, when, and where I met Mort. There's quite a romance connected with it. But here comes Mary and Ruth, and I will postpone all

further biography."

"Don't let us interrupt your pleasant story," said Mrs. Arthurs. "I know it has been entertaining from your betraying looks. Proceed, please, and we will listen also. You will not mind if I take up this work, I know, when I tell you, it is for a bazaar, or sale, which the King's Daughters will hold in the Fall, in aid of the Old Ladies' Home. Ruth and Hilda solicited my aid, and I devote my spare moments to the worthy object."

"Wouldn't you like me to do something for you, girls?" asked Beatrice. "I would like to crochet something.

What would you like?"

"O, anything from an infant's sack to an old lady's hood!" answered Ruth. "We do not know of anything

yet in that line."

"Then I will begin with a little sack for a baby. I love to do them, and can work better when I talk. Please bring your basket of wools, and I will select something suitable." bringing them together again! "Who knows! One thing, I will be very careful not to disclose the relationship existing between Mort and Alan." She laughed aloud in the exuberance of her joy over the secret, and meeting the inquiring

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yet in that line."

"Then I will begin with a little sack for a baby. I love to do them, and can work better when I talk. Please bring your basket of wools, and I will select something suitable." "We will accede to your request upon one condition, and that is, that you resume your interesting narrative," said Hilda.

"Agreed!" responded Mrs. Moreland. "It will be better

that way, as my work might awaken sad memories."

They wondered at her meaning, but contented themselves with the feeling that she would explain the reference, if she wished them to know.

Ruth and Hilda brought in their store of wools, and a selection was made for three little jackets; one in white, one in pink, and one in blue.

"How kind of you, Mrs. Moreland, to assist us!" ex-

claimed Ruth. "What can we do for you?"

"You might call me Aunt Bee, instead of the formal Mrs.

Moreland; it would sound more homelike."

"We will, Aunt Bee!" said Hilda, bestowing a kiss upon the surprised woman. "We would truly like you for an Aunt!"

Violet Morriton was astonished to learn that Beatrice Moreland was so far from what she had pictured her. attributed the change to the influence of marriage. certainly must have redeemed her good points. Probably Mary saw the hidden possibilities, and admired, while I saw only the glaring defects of an intriguing girl, and detested. It she wears a mask, it is so transparent, one can easily detect her motives. In point of fact, I should name frankness as her crowning virtue. I must watch, or she will insinuate herself into my good graces, and I shall ask her to accompany me on that long-talked-of journey, before I am aware of it. If I had not known her to be deceptive in former days, I should place the utmost confidence in her marvellous reminiscences. With these warnings of the past ringing through the brain, I cannot help taking all her sayings well-seasoned," she thought. "Her ingenuity excelled her powers of dissimulation. How clearly that little scene in regard to the new gown presents itself! We were all expected to act and look the nicest possible, at an

exhibition given by the pupils of our seminary. Nearly every one had provided a new robe for the great occasion, unless it was Beatrice; she informed us, she should be obliged to wear the same old one. Yet, when the anticipated event took place, no one was more daintily arranged in an exquisite India lawn, than Bee Moreland. 'What a lovely new gown!' cried the girls in chorus. 'O, I have had this so long it seems quite passe' said Bee. Some believed the statement; others saw through her design. I heard one call her a 'beautiful fabricator.' She told Mary that it was an old gown her mother had worn before her marriage. It had been altered for her, and made very tasty with a few ribbons. I really think if she had been the wife of Ananias, she would have discovered some outlet in regard to the price kept back. She would have represented that they had disposed of the land on the installment plan, or had taken a mortgage. She certainly would have tried to prove that they had turned in all the money received.

"Nevertheless, I am strangely interested in the marriage episode. Imagine a bride learning French and German, on a bridal trip! I should believe that impossible, had I not known a similar proposition to an intended bride! Thinking of Alan reminds me that Mortimer Moreland must have resembled him in many ways. I am as eager as the others to hear the incidents of the Moreland trio. In some unaccountable way, the narrative seems to bring me nearer to Alan. I suppose from presenting to view the

places which I have associated with him."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MORELAND MEMORIES.

"When are you going to tell us the romance, Aunt Bee?" asked Ruth, as there was a lull in the general conversation.

"Any time you wish," answered Beatrice. "Now, if it is agreeable, though I think I am very impolite to monopolize all the conversation."

"We will consider you free from any breach of etiquette, Beatrice, and await your pleasure in entertaining," said Mrs. Arthurs. "I have never heard the story, so it will be equally interesting to all."

"I will accede to your wishes, on one condition," said Mrs. Moreland; "that is, if the monologue becomes too

tiresome you will excuse me from continuing it."

"Once, upon a time, as the story-tellers would say, there lived a little girl named Bee. She was the idol of the household, and all its inmates rendered her the homage of a queen. Five older brothers, and even a younger one, strove with each other to gratify every wish, and she became a selfish little sovereign. The parents were poor; but they tried to shield the loved one from the adverse winds, and bestowed luxuries far beyond their station. The child loved only the fair and beautiful, and despised the dark and gloomy. She lived among the bloom, flitting about in the sunshine, from flower to flower, like a bee, extracting sweets. They called her the 'Busy Bee,' as she roamed about at her own sweet will, culling the fairest and sweetest blossoms.

"Aunt Ellie petted the child, giving her the vacant place which her own little daughter had held. I give you all these minute details that you may understand more clearly. Aunt Ellie, mamma's only sister, lived in Maine, near a fashionable summer resort. Her home was a large old-fashioned New England farm house. It contained sixteen

rooms, having originally been built for two families. It had been in the Smith family for years, and had fallen into the hands of its present owner, Will Smith, Aunt Ellie's

husband, about the time of his marriage.

"Aunt Ellie, with true Yankee thrift, opened her home for summer boarders. The scheme was successful. She cleared the old home of the mortgage, and laid by something for a rainy day. She paid my school expenses, at the best seminaries, stipulating that I should spend part of my vacations with her. The old home was filled every season, and I made many friends among the guests. I

helped her entertain sometimes by singing or playing.

"Four years ago, this coming summer, when I arrived at the dear old place, I found a lady whom they called Mrs. Moreland. I fell in love with her at once, and strange to say the attraction was mutual. She was very delicate, and spent much time out of doors. The son, who had accompanied her, was detained on important business, in Boston. He had committed the little mother to Auntie's care during his absence, asking her to watch very carefully that she might not mourn for him while away. After I came, I relieved Aunt Ellie of the responsibility. I assumed it all, and found it a pleasing occupation. We spent most of the time together. When the weather permitted, we stayed out of doors; either on the piazza, in easy chairs, or in hammocks, on the shady lawn. I brought her the choicest fruits the place afforded, and she reciprocating, described the foreign places which she had visited, so beautifully that I was enraptured. How I did wish that I was rich, in order that I might travel, and see all the charming sights, and wonders of the Orient! How nice it would be to wear diamonds and silks every day! It would be just like fairyland! I thought the nicest of all would be to have all the money I wanted to spend; then I should not feel sorry for what I had spent and wish I had done differently.

"One morning, Mrs. Moreland and I were on the lawn; she was reclining in the hammock, I was sitting near by

on a camp stool, reading to her, from one of Rosa Nouchette Carey's books. In the midst of a sentence we were interrupted by some one exclaiming, 'Well, Ivy Vine, what little tot have you here?'

"The mother helped the delusion by answering, 'O, a little Bee has flown into the hive, and improves the shining

hours by gathering honey for me.'

"We laughed at the simile, and Mrs. Moreland hastened to make amends by saying, 'Excuse me, Beatrice, and permit me to present my son, Mortimer, to you. Miss Somers, Mr. Moreland.'

"I rose with all my offended dignity; if my outraged feelings could have risen, I should have been six feet in stature. I acknowledged the introduction, and met one of the noblest men that ever breathed. I thought mother and son might wish to see each other alone, and turned to depart,

when Mr. Moreland objected.

"'Miss Somers,' he said, 'you must forgive me for taking you for a little girl! You certainly did look like one, with your curls hanging around your shoulders as I approached; but do not deprive my mother of your company, as I would like to go to my room, and part with the dust of travel.' He bowed and departed, before I could utter a dissenting word.

"It was a case of mutual deception. He had taken me for a child, while I had considered him an over-grown boy! 'Why, Mrs. Moreland, I never imagined your son was so old! I thought he might possibly be a young college student; but I find a man older than I am, and really, he looks older than his mother!' I said.

"You know, my dear, appearances are often deceitful,' remarked Mrs. Moreland, with a laugh. 'I am older than I look, while Mortimer is younger. I am only sixteen years his senior, and he seems more like a brother, than a son. My invalid ways have made me so dependent, that I rely upon him for protection. When his father died, some five years ago, he had just completed the preparations

necessary for a missionary. He immediately laid aside his plans, and devoted himself to my welfare. I accepted his sacrifice willingly, at first; then I remonstrated with him, for allowing me to become so selfish as to deprive him from following his chosen vocation. I never shall forget his answer. 'You dear, clinging Ivy-Vine, you have twined your tendrils of love so closely around my heart, that I could not leave you, if I would! Rest assured, that you are dearer to me, than all the souls in far-off India! Do you think I should be doing the Master's service, when I knew a loved one was pining for me in the old home? He has given me a mission, to watch over you, which I accept as graciously as I would one which carried me thousands of miles away. Indeed, we sometimes find it harder to perform the work nearby, than that which lies farther away, I am satisfied with either, though I must state, that life with you will be far more agreeable than elsewhere.'

"'My fears were banished by his reasoning, and the subject has never been mentioned since. Through his care, life has been brighter and happier than I ever sup-

posed it could be.'

"Mr. Moreland soon returned and seated himself near his mother. He expressed his thanks for the care which I had given her, during his absence. One could easily recognize the firm bond of love existing between them, by the silent, unobtrusive watch which he constantly exercised over her.

"I found him very entertaining. His pleasant conversation, mingled with a rare fund of humor, kept us so deeply interested that the summons to dinner made us aware of the flight of time. I had been so absorbed in listening to the wonderful description of places and people, that I had forgotten my previous intention of leaving them. Reminded of my remissness by the dinner bell, I apologized. He said that my presence had been an added pleasure to the morning's enjoyment.

"After satisfying our physical needs in a most substantial

manner, he invited us to an afternoon's drive. We took a winding road beside the river to a lovely little place which boasted of a country inn. The day was delightful and cool; the air, mild and fragrant with the breath of summer flowers. Its exhilarating influence increased the buoyancy of our spirits, till we forgot the cares and worries of life.

"The days passed on in the same joyous manner, until six weeks had gone since the arrival of Mortimer Moreland. He was intending to remain only two weeks longer. In the early Fall he would take his mother abroad, and spend the Winter in the southern part of France. The announcement was made one morning. It came upon me as suddenly as a thunderbolt. I had been so happy that I never thought of such a trial as separation. I excused myself with the plea of writing home-letters, and went to my room for that purpose. After trying for some time ineffectually, I put it off till I felt more in the mood. Taking a book which lay near by, I wandered to an old summer-house which stood in the lower part of the grounds, unobserved, as I thought. I sat down, opened the book without looking, and began thinking.

""What had come to me,' I wondered, 'to make me feel so out of sorts with everybody, and everything. Had I, like a silly moth flown too near and singed my wings in the

Moreland light?'

"Before I could answer the question, I was startled by the voice of Mortimer Moreland, asking, 'What fascinating book engages you, so deeply that you have deserted us? What is it?'

"I am sure, I don't know!' I answered; 'I took it up as I came out, without glancing at the title.' I looked at the book and found I had been holding it upside down. We both laughed at the incident, and especially at the title, 'Advice to Young Ladies.'

"Mr. Moreland stood outside of the summer-house, leaning his folded arms upon a surrounding rail, not far

from my seat.

"'Miss Somers,' said he, 'I have intruded upon your privacy to ask you a most important question; one which concerns our future welfare.'

"I nodded assent, thinking he was about to make the proposition that I should become a companion to his mother. But I was nearly startled out of my wits when he asked me, if I would be his wife. He waited for an answer, while I sat staring in bewilderment out upon the distant fields. After a time I met his glance, and saw in his eyes that which I could not resist, even had I wished. I will not weary you with all the details, or sweet little sayings. I was happier than I had ever dreamed of being in this world. In fact, it all seemed like a dream, from which I prayed not to awake.

"Our engagement was a surprise to no one, except myself. Uncle Will and Aunt Ellie had seen it from the first. What Mort could see necessary for his happiness in such an insignificant little creature as I was, I could not imagine!

"He said he was first attracted by the lavish praise which his mother bestowed upon me. Afterwards, his curiosity was displaced by a deeper interest. He had never thought of marrying before. He supposed he could accomplish his mission in life better as a single man. After his father's death, he had decided to devote himself to the care of his mother, and allow no one to come between them. He felt that our marriage, instead of severing the bond, would cement it more firmly.

"And I know that it did. Do you wonder that I could help loving Mother Moreland so much, when she gave me the most precious object she possessed, her only son? Contrast the difference between her and the others who would keep an only son dangling at their apron strings!

"We tried to arrange matters pertaining to our marriage, with Mrs. Moreland and Aunt Ellie. Mort said he would like to be married at the end of the month, in the sweet, rustic spot, if it was agreeable to me.

"I objected, at first, it gave so short a time, for a bride o prepare her trousseau. Finally, I consented to their united persuasion. Aunt Ellie was delighted and helped Mort to gain his way in every proposition. She said she would take charge of everything. She had always intended to give me my bridal outfit, and I could have the quilts, bedding and table-linen tomorrow, if I wished. She was as good as her word. She called in a most efficient woman, Ann Maria Jones, who could turn her hand to anything.

"Aunt Ellie and Mrs. Moreland entered into the preparations with the zest of children. I was relieved from all care and anxiety. My time was at my own disposal after two hours in the morning, spent under the dressmaker's hands.

"The situation was so novel to me, that I hardly credited my surroundings. Just to think that I was having so many new things, without worrying about unpaid bills! Sometimes I watched the proceedings, and like the old woman of the nursery rhymes, wonderingly asked, 'Is it I?'

"My mamma came two weeks before the wedding and

rejoiced with the others over the coming event.

"The bridal day was ushered in by an auspicious dawn. The clear, blue sky bore no trace of fleecy clouds across its wide expanse. The sun rode forth in his glittering chariot, and awoke all nature with a rosy kiss. The occasion was made a gala day for the whole village. We were married in the country church. The news of a church wedding spread far and wide, as the saying goes, 'like wildfire.' Everybody I should think from a radius of ten miles came even several guests from the hotel. The young ladies of the society decorated the church beautifully with roses and ferns.

"Two little flower-girls preceded us from the church door, up the aisle to the altar scattering flowers in our path, and unwinding white ribbon. It was symbolical of our future happiness. After the ceremony the little ones went out before us, in the same manner. I was walking out of the church, feeling fully the responsibility of my new position, and a little fearful of my ability to meet the requisite demands, when my fears were routed by a familiar strain

which the organist was sending forth in the beautiful melody of 'Loghengrin's Wedding March.' So appealing was the music, that I could not refrain from casting a timid glance at the gallery to view the unknown performer, when lo and behold! I met the roguish and teasing face of my younger brother Rob, fully reflected in the mirror before him! The surprise deepened the tint upon my cheeks and he saw that he was recognized. Mamma told me that she and Mort

had planned Rob's presence as a surprise.

"We returned to Aunt Ellie's and held a reception from three till five, in the afternoon. Every one came who wished. We were informed that it was customary to serenade a newly-married pair, and submitted to the ordeal in the evening. Mort gave the band a check sufficient to defray the expenses of a new uniform. They extended a vote of thanks amid rousing cheers, and gave their best music for nearly two hours. Our collation for them consisted of cakes, ice cream, chicken-salad, lemonade and coffee. Mort told them he would not offer wine on the joyous occasion, as he did not believe in its use. The leader commended him for his noble principles, and said all men would be better, if they did not use it.

"The next morning we departed for Western Massachusetts to Mortimer's old home. We remained a short time, only sufficient for Mort to place his property in the hands of a competent person. He thought we might be absent two or three years, if we wished, and wanted everything properly

attended to during his absence.

"We sailed from New York on the fifteenth of September, in one of the large ocean steamers of the Inman Line. It was the very day on which Mort had intended to depart

before he thought of marrying.

"I found, after my marriage, that my husband was very rich. And, strange to say, what I had formerly considered the necessary lever, with which to move the world, I now looked upon, as small and insignificant. My old restless, envious spirit seemed to have been banished, by the influence

of plenty. I found that I did not wish for the unattainable. It seemed as though my needs were anticipated, and provided for, before I even knew them myself. No one could help being happy in such a congenial atmosphere."

Beatrice paused a few moments, and examined her work. "I think the morning has nearly ended, and I will not

weary you by continuing my story," she added.

"O, Bee, you have not told us anything yet, about your

stay on the other side!" said Violet.

"I have taken so much time, I could not conscientiously extend the Moreland Memories. But, if you desire it, I will tell you a few things about our foreign life, after dinner," replied Bee.

"How nice it will be!" remarked Ruth.

"Yes, it is awfully sweet of you, Aunt Bee, to entertain us so beautifully, and promise another treat for the afternoon! How fortunate, that you came to Oakhurst!" said Hilda.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MYSTERIOUS COUSIN LAN.

At an early hour in the afternoon, the ladies at Oakhurst, assembled in the library to hear the continuation of Mrs.

Moreland's story.

"I have already told you of the manner in which we spent the time of the voyage. I found the study hours so pleasant, I was unwilling to drop them, after our landing. I told Mort, if he could bear with my ignorance, I would endeavor to learn what he thought best, provided it was not history. I could never remember dates, and I was too old to learn. Yet, strange, as it may seem, he undertook even that before I was aware of his intention. He commenced reading English history. He read only a page, at first, and stopped in the most interesting part. In the course of a month, he began to question me about the preceding readings, and I found to my great astonishment, that I had actually remembered a few historical facts!

"We landed at Queenstown, Ireland, and spent several weeks among the wonders of the Emerald Isle. The season was so far advanced that we though best to defer our stay in England and Scotland, until the following Spring. decided it was more preferable to cross the English Channel while the weather was mild, and become settled in our new quarters, than to wait until the chilly Winter had made its appearance. Accordingly, we crossed the Irish Sea, from Dublin to Liverpool, and took the cars direct to Dover, thence by boat to Calais. The trip was intensely interesting as the weather brought only a succession of pleasant days. It seemed to me as though I had found the source of unalloyed enjoyment. The great wish of my life had been granted. I was free to travel, and view the wonders of other lands. We made a sojourn of a few weeks in Paris, to recover from the fatigue of travel. I found the gay Parisian life like a transformation scene! And as marvellously fascinating as Aladdin's wonderful lamp of the

Arabian Nights!

"We went from Paris to Mentone, and Cannes, where we passed the Winter. We were very pleasantly located, and found the climate in both places highly beneficial to Mrs. Moreland. We spent our time quietly and profitably. We still kept up the morning study and readings. The afternoons were devoted to sight-seeing; occasionally, we made a few social calls.

"In the early part of May we left France for England. On reaching Dover, we found Mort's cousin awaiting us. It was a great surprise to me, as I did not know he had any relatives aside from his mother. Mort had written him, asking if he would direct us to a suitable place, and expected to find a letter answering all inquiries, on our arrival."

"I was under the impression that the mother and son were the only surviving relatives. I am glad to learn I am mistaken."

"So they were!" answered Beatrice. "That is, the only near ones. Lan is a second or third cousin; I don't remember which. Quite distant, you see. Yet he was near enough to Mort, to be his brother. He resembled him, not only in appearance, but in voice and manners. I was sometimes puzzled myself to know which one was speaking.

"Cousin Lan conducted us to a charming little spot among the Devonshire hills; a beautiful place in the most fertile part of England, with an even, delightful temperature. He was overworked, and remained a week to recuperate. Our morning work met his hearty approval, and he asked admission to the readings, which we readily granted. We promised to spend the month of August with him, when he bade us good-bye.

"In June we made a short trip into Wales. Though we enjoyed its rugged scenery, it lacked the charm of beautiful

Devon, and we soon returned to its peaceful vales. We were so pleased with the lovely country, that we wished we

might, sometime, make it our permanent home.

"We met Cousin Lan, as we had promised, and spent the whole month with him, and his family, or progeny, or whatever you may choose to term it. Dear old Cousin Lan! How I wish you all might know of the wonderful amount of good he is doing!"

"Do tell us all about him, Aunt Bee!" exclaimed Ruth. "Where does he live? What does he do? And who is he? Is he a married man? Young or old?" Ruth's rapid questions threw the listeners into a state of merriment.

"Please tell us, Aunt Bee!" added Hilda.

"Yes, Beatrice, we await your pleasure, and will try not

to be too inquisitive," said Mrs. Arthurs.

Beatrice Moreland sat carefully counting her stitches. Though apparently absorbed in her work, she knew everything that was transpiring, and only awaited Violet's appeal,

before complying with the urgent requests.

Violet understood the state of affairs. She knew that Beatrice would not resume the narrative till she had joined the general request. She was deeply interested, though the little incidents had sent a curious thrill along her veins. She saw she must express her desire, if she would not debar the others from pleasure. She turned and said, "I wish, Bee, you would relieve our suspense, and tell us all about the wonderful new relative. I am as curious as the girls to know all about him. Who is the mysterious Cousin Lan?"

Mrs. Moreland hesitated before replying. She was thinking deeply, and wished she might dispel the mystery which she had created. Prudence, however, came to the rescue, and showed that such an act would not only be unwise, but a gross mistake. She heeded the silent monitor, and allowed it to guide her actions.

"Cousin Lan," she repeated, glancing up and seeing all eyes riveted upon her, "O, he's only Cousin Lan. I don't

think I had better tell you his name, as he might not like it. He shrinks from all notoriety. I can safely say, he is one of the noblest men that ever lived. He is not only a preacher but a saint. He devotes his whole life to the poor and needy. He works with the zeal of a brother for fallen man. He labors specially among the young; inculcating within their

hearts the principles of honesty and industry.

"He owns a fine old-fashioned country house near one of England's fashionable watering places. 'Happy Haven,' as it is called, is kept in order, by an elderly couple who were pensioners on his bounty. Cousin Lan runs down to the old place, whenever he needs recruiting. He always spends the month of August there, and part of the time he gives the poor little waifs of the great city an outing. He devotes two weeks to this benevolent object. He has two large tents raised on the grounds for their accommodation. The boys are free to enjoy themselves, in whatever way they please; all kinds of amusements are provided for their entertainment. They can do as they please all day long. I really think they prize their liberty more than anything else. Cousin Lan has one party for a week; at the end of the time, the boys return, and another set fill their places.

"When he told us of his scheme, and wished us to remain and see his little flock, I objected mentally, if not outwardly. I thought we would be crazed with all the uproar, and hilarity. Mort said he should enjoy it, and he did. In fact, we all did; I never saw so many boys together who conducted themselves so well. Mort and Cousin Lan

were boys with them.

"I think Cousin Lan must have had some great sorrow, or disappointment in his life. He seemed so sad at times. I asked Mort if he knew of any; he did not, and I was no wiser than before. But, I concluded that whatever it was, he was blameless. Some one must have injured him."

CHAPTER XXV.

"CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS."

"AFTER leaving 'Happy Haven' we returned to Devon, and made arrangements to go to Scotland. We spent six weeks among the Highlands, and I brought away a large pot of the sturdy Scotch Heather. We passed the winter, as we had the preceding one, at Mentone and Cannes.

The following Spring and Summer was selected for an extended trip through Italy and Switzerland. The first of July found us in Germany. We had intended to spend only a month there, and return to Devon for the Winter and Spring. Afterwards we were to turn our steps homeward, and join the loved ones in the United States. But circumstances changed our plans, and we remained there several months.

"I became a little indisposed and fatigued. Mort and Mother Ivy insisted upon a physician being called. The great M. D. after a careful diagnosis, said that I should live very quietly for a few months. He considered a tranquil life in a pleasant family would be more advantageous than the commotion of a hotel. He recommended moderate exercise each day and pleasant intercourse among friends. He prohibited all excitement and overdoing. So I, who had never known an ache or a pain, was under a physician's regime. I protested, at first, against the imperious command. But Mort and Mother Ivy were so solicitous concerning my welfare, that I gradually succumbed to the verdict of remaining in Germany for a time. However, it was an awful disappointment, as we all wished to return to our beloved Devon.

"We obtained lodgings with a Mrs. Herr, in a small town, not far from a large city. We had a pretty suite of three They were very pleasant, and we made them homelike and attractive by adding whatever we desired.

"Mrs. Herr was an elderly woman, and a widow. She supported herself by taking lodgers. She was intelligent and entertaining, having been for many years a companion to a lady interested in philanthropy. The family consisted of the mother, a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Lena Herr, and her little son of ten.

"Lena Herr was a trained nurse, and quite devoted to her profession. She was engaged upon a very critical case at the time of our arrival, and we did not meet her for several weeks. The little boy, Eddie, was an invalid. He was bright and cheerful though a sufferer from hip disease. He had fallen while at play a few years before and injured the hip bone. The mother had used a large part of her income for the relief of the child, but so far all treatment had only been temporary. Nothing permanent could be obtained, and it seemed as though he must live an incurable invalid.

"Mort, on his own responsibility, consulted our physician about the case. He said the child could be cured, without doubt, if he could have the right treatment. A surgical operation would be necessary, and it could only be performed at the hospital. It would not only take time but involve expense.

"Mort said that was of no import, as he would willingly bear all the expenses, if the child's relatives were favorable

to the undertaking.

"We confided the plans to the grandmother; she wept for joy, and asked Mort if he would write Mrs. Lena and give her the doctor's statement. He complied, and received not only a favorable answer, but a mother's heartfelt thanks. She wrote she had already consulted the leading physicians of a certain hospital in regard to the case. As soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, she intended placing Eddie there for treatment. She thought if her health continued, she could pay the half reduction which would be made in her favor.

"Mort succeeded in convincing the mother that it was a

great pleasure for him to give a few dollars from his large fortune for the Father's poor little deserving creatures.

"The hospital proposed was situated some twenty-five or thirty miles from us. Mort and the physician went there, stated the case, and brought back a most encouraging report. Little Eddie's eyes sparkled with the hope that he should be like other boys; that he could throw away his crutches and could run and leap.

"He was taken to the hospital about four weeks after our arrival. He bore the operation finely and recovered from its effects. The restoration was slow, but, when we left there was a marked improvement, and he was progressing towards a permanent recovery. Poor, little Eddie, I wish I

could see him again!

"My little son was born in November. The sixteenth they tell me. I have not much recollection of the event, as I was too sick to remember. He did not live long, I think only a few days, or hours. Everything connected with that time appears in a confused state."

"O, Beatrice, I did not know you had had a little one!" exclaimed Mrs. Arthurs. "Excuse me, please, for interrupting, but if it is painful for you to recall the past, I would

not try. We will not ask you to entertain us longer."

"Though it may be painful, Mary, it relieves the heart to share its sorrows with others," answered Beatrice. "My little Mortimer lies in the family lot of the Herrs, that is what I have been told. But I have a strange feeling that it is not so. It seems as though my baby was waiting for me on earth instead of in heaven.

"My recovery was slow and tedious. All ambition seemed suddenly to have deserted me. I took no interest in anything. The spirit of contentment had gained possession and I accepted the situation without a murmur. I loved to roam among the wondrous castles which a mother's imagination erects for her little ones. I would sit for hours, if unmolested, and follow the flights of fancy. Yet, the frail structures never fell; their gossamer strands were as strong as solid walls of masonry.

"Dr. K— said that I must be aroused from the apathy; it might be advisable to visit new places. Possibly strange scenes would stir the benumbed faculties, and restore them to their normal state.

"We left our quiet home with the Herrs, and started for Italy. We had been with them so long we had become quite attached. Before leaving Mort gave a check to Mother Herr for the education of little Eddie. Lena was away at the time, taking charge of a patient. She bade us good-bye several days before our departure, saying she never could be thankful enough to Mr. Moreland for his great kindness. We promised to visit them the next summer, if possible, and write occasionally.

"The fair skies of Italy with the blue waters of the Mediterranean were no more attractive than the snows of Iceland. I cared nothing for the works of the grand old masters; I

was interested only in the Madonnas and children.

"We arrived at Rouen in the Spring. Yet the old Norman city which caught the ashes of the martyred Joan of Arc,

failed to awaken anything but a passing interest.

"Mort startled me one evening, when we were sitting alone. Mother Moreland had retired, and we were about to follow her example. 'Bee,' he said, 'what would you do if I were to go away?'

'Why go with you, of course,' I replied complacently.

'I see you do not understand my meaning,' he continued, 'and I will try to enlighten you. I am sorry to tell you, but know it is absolutely necessary to acquaint you with the situation. For years I have been affected with heart disease. I have consulted the most skilful physicians, and through their aid, have been enabled to reach a very precious period in life. I have been improving during the past year, and flattered myself that the troublesome symptoms had totally disappeared. Lately the pain and suffocation has returned with renewed force, and I have been obliged to consult medical aid, and learn that my existence is only a short matter of time. Dr. F—states that I must live quietly,

if I would prolong life a single moment. The sands of life may run out in a few hours, days, or weeks. Mamma Ivy is unconscious of my condition, and I wish her to remain so. I have buoyed myself up with the false hopes that I might be spared till she had crossed the silent river. Now, I find that it is not permitted to be, I must ask you to help me make our last days the sweetest and happiest of all our lives. It is the Father's will, that I must obey the law of nature earlier than some; but I know you would not wish me to remain on earth in pain, when freedom was offered in the elysium fields.'

"I was aroused from the state of indifference. It was a rude awaking though it proved an object of interest. I lost sight of self, in the care of my loved ones. 'O, Mort,' I cried, 'I will do the best I can! But it is simply awful. I will be careful and shield our mother from all I can, dear.'

"We sat and talked an hour or more, arranging plans for the future; conversing so cheerfully that one might have supposed we were providing for a pleasant trip, instead of a sorrowful separation. We decided it was wiser to return to England, than to remain among strangers.

"I thought my poor heart would break, and I could not keep from uttering one bitter cry: 'If baby had only lived, I could bear it better! I should not be all alone!' Mort looked so sad I restrained my feelings and became cheerful for his sake.

"Mortimer lived only six weeks after we reached Devon. He gradually became weaker and weaker, till the end came from paralysis. Mother Moreland realized the situation only a few days before his death. We buried him according to his wish among the sweet vales of Devon.

"The separation was more than the mother could bear, and in less than three short months she left the sorrows of earth for the joys of heaven. I could not wish her to remain. It was impossible for Ivy-Vine (as Mort called her) to exist after the support, to which she had clung so trustingly, had been removed.

"Three years had intervened between the time I left home a happy bride, and returned a bereaved widow. My dear ones were resting in a foreign land, and I felt disconsolate. Cousin Lan proved a 'true friend in time of need.' But for his aid, and counsel, and sympathy I should have fainted under my heavy load of sorrow. Mamma and Aunt Ellie have petted me till I long for a stronger tonic; I need some one to tell me of the many faults, like Mortimer, or Cousin Lan. I am getting restless, and feel an inclination to visit the places where I was so happy across the sea.

"I have received no news from the Herrs for nearly a year. I was too much absorbed with my own troubles to write, after Mort stopped. I would like to know if little Eddie has recovered, and think it might be a good idea to go and see. I also wish to learn if the 'bread' which Mort 'cast upon the waters' has been found, as he said it would. Then I am quite anxious to consult Cousin Lan about the removal of baby from Germany and the placing of him beside his father. I have talked with mamma and she agrees with me, so I think I shall cross the ocean again this Summer and remain a few months. I know I shall be the happier for it, as I shall satisfy the longing which urges me onward."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Wonders Will Never Cease!"

"O, WHAT an interesting story!" exclaimed Ruth, as Mrs. Moreland finished. "Many thanks for your kindness, in complying with our wishes, when it was so sad for you

to recall the past."

"I, too, would add my sincere thanks, Aunt Bee, and ask you to pardon my curiosity, if it has led beyond the bounds of prudence," said Hilda. "Your life has been as romantic as a novel, and you are such a beautiful story-teller, that you have held us all spell-bound."

"Am I?" queried Mrs. Moreland.

"I can assure you, Bee, that nothing detrimental was intended from Hilda's ambiguous compliment," said Mrs. Arthurs, apologetically. "We are not only indebted to you for a fine entertainment but for one of life's most valuable lessons, which you have so faithfully illustrated by the noble sacrifice of self for the good of those dependent upon

you."

"No, no, Mary, I do not merit such lavish praise. I only did what any one would have done, in the same situation. It was no sacrifice for me to minister to the needs of my dear ones. I knew naught but the sweetest pleasure in serving them. I would gladly have given my own life for them, had it been possible. But, I will not murmur against Providence. I do not believe in hanging our sorrows upon our sleeves, for the curious to peck at. And then, I promised Mort that I would neither mourn nor fret, so I flatter myself with the consolation that 'it is all for the best.' The oft-repeated maxim is not sufficiently consoling, however, to satisfy me. It cannot prevent my restlessness. Why I get so nervous at times, I would like to jump out of the world, if I only knew where I should land."

"Oh, Aunt Bee," cried Ruth, "you remind me of the man in Mother Goose,

'So wondrous wise, He jumped into the bramble bush, And put out both his eyes.'

I am afraid any athletic attempt would place you in the same predicament, and like the man of nursery fame, you would be compelled to 'jump back, to put them in again.'"

Ruth's timely simile was received with a cheery laugh which dispelled the depressing clouds of sorrow as swiftly as the morning sun dispels the damp penetrating vapors of the night.

"Aunt Bee, would it be requiring too much, to ask if you will read German a little while each morning, with me?"

asked Hilda.

Mrs. Moreland did not answer. Apparently she was lost in a reverie, among the memories of the ever-present past. The sad, yet happy reminiscences threw a sweet, pensive resigned look upon the countenance, making it as beautiful as an artist's ideal. Again she was living over departed joys, and basking in the sunshine of an unbroken household.

Mrs. Arthurs placed a finger upon her lips and motioned the girls to silence. She thought best to allow Beatrice to indulge in the day dream. Violet, she judged, was too much absorbed with some perplexing problem of her own, to notice the lull in the conversation.

Beatrice sighed, and the idol of the past enshrined within the heart, fell shattered from its pedestal. She saw she resembled the little German canary, which was dead though bearing the appearance of life. She was living though the life had been crushed out of the heart. Again she sighed, when she became conscious of the intense stillness. Glancing up, she met Hilda's inquiring gaze, and asked, "Were you speaking to me, dear? Pardon me, I was so busy with my 'Lares and Penates,' that I had forgotten the existence

of any one else."

Hilda repeated her former question, to which Beatrice gave a ready assent. "I can assure you," she added, "it will be no trouble, only a pleasant reminder of the past. If the others will allow, we will go to your room, make a selection, return, and read to them. We can read the German, and translate into English. Mort and I always did that way. Is it agreeable?"

The proposition met with favor. Beatrice and Hilda returned with Goethe's Faust, and entertained the com-

pany with the beautiful poem.

"Wouldn't you like to join us?" asked Beatrice, turning

to Violet. "I know you read German."

"O, no," replied Violet. "I much prefer listening. Your accent is very good, and you are 'such a beautiful

story-teller."

"Mort said my accent was good, notwithstanding the frequent falls which I made over the great stumbling blocks of the language. Why, sometimes the words seemed so huge, I could neither get them in nor out of my mouth."

said Beatrice humorously.

Violet sat in a dreamy mood. The readings required no effort on her part to sustain them. Exempt from any requirement, she was as free to follow her wandering fancies as when alone. The soft, modulated tones of the readers fell upon her ear like a distant chime of bells, with their mellow cadence. She was strangely happy. To what source, her joy was attributable, she knew not. She only realized that she was satisfied with a consciousness which brought its own unsurpassed peace. She was willing to forego the investigation of the method whereby she had reached such a state of bliss; a thing hitherto contrary to her nature.

The beautiful light of truth was shining upon her with its rich effulgence. It was flooding all the avenues of the heart, and chasing away the gruesome shadows of doubt and

unbelief. It was guiding her unconsciously, yet voluntarily, into new paths. In childhood's days, she had crouched for hours, beside the babbling brook, listening to its rippling music, as it went singing over its pebbly bed, on its way to join the mighty river. All her little woes had floated away with the tiny paper crafts she had carefully placed in the water. She could never learn why the little drops of water collected in a certain spot, and formed a spring, which was the source of a great river. Yet she loved the mysterious brook, and learned the lesson of contentment from its soothing song.

Mrs. Morleand's voice had recalled the memories of the Summer stream; sweet as the rhythm of its flow, it had carried away all the petty troubles, lulling the listener to a happy state. Violet's early training had taught her to accept the pleasant when opportune, notwithstanding prejudice. For her to know, was to act. Immediate

action was the result of resolution.

Her mind had undergone a marvellous change in regard to Beatrice. There was a vast difference between her former schoolmate, and the present Mrs. Moreland. Wherein that difference lay, she could not determine. She gave herself the benefit of the query, however, and attributed the change to her friend. She sat complacently awaiting the end of the reading. She was interested rather more in her own fortune than that of Margaret, the principal character of the poem.

"What do you think of the heroine, Aunt Vi?" asked Hilda as they closed their books. "Isn't it a wonderful

creation of the imagination?"

"It is a very beautiful story," responded Violet. "But, I do not think myself competent to venture an opinion upon the maiden, with my faulty judgment. And, in the present case, I must plead guilty to inattention, so I have not followed you very closely. You and Bee must pardon me, for being so remiss. I have been thinking very deeply about you, Beatrice, and wonder if you could help me."

"I will gladly do anything that lies in my power, to assist you, Violet," responded Beatrice. What is it you wish?"

"You have shown yourself so efficient in your ministrations to others, that you may be able to smooth my rugged path a little," continued Violet, without answering Bee's

question.

"O, Violet," exclaimed Beatrice, "it seems ironical, or even ludicrous to speak of your 'rugged path,' of life! I always used to envy you for being able to walk a path of roses, while I was obliged to struggle on among the briers and brambles. Excuse me, please, for making light of your misfortune. It only shows how little we understand our friends, when we are passing judgment upon them. Tell me what you wish, and we may be able to help you out of the trouble, no matter what it is."

"Beatrice, will you allow me to accompany you to Europe,

this Summer?" asked Violet beseechingly, "I have-"

"Go to Europe with me!" repeated Beatrice, interrupting. "Certainly you can; there, or any other place; round the world, if you like. But do you really mean it? It will

be just too delightful for anything!"

"Most assuredly I do," responded Violet. "I not only desire it, but earnestly entreat for the opportunity which will afford me such a genial fellow-traveler. No wonder you are astonished at my question. I am, myself; there has been nothing foreseen, or even considered in regard to it, on my part. On the contrary, I would not listen to any suggestion of Mary's that I should invite you to go with me. You must forgive me, Bee, for so cruelly misjudging you. I find I have made a great mistake. They say 'confession is good for the soul;' if so, then I would ask for absolution from your hands. I will be perfectly candid, and say that I wish you to take me with you. Do not let me change any part of the intended journey. All I require is simply to participate in your pleasure, or sorrows, even. Will it be agreeable for you to take me along under these conditions?"

"Oh, it will be lovely!" assented Beatrice. "How

pleased mamma and Aunt Ellie will be over the arrangement! They were troubled about my going alone, and objected at first. Oh, it is awfully sweet in you to go! If some good fairy had told me to select a companion, I would have chosen an angel from heaven, before thinking of you. How beautifully the Father cares for his children. Mort would say, 'He knows what is best, and gives more, and better than we can ask.' But I am glad you really like me, Violet; I think I almost used to worship you, in the old days; you saw through my subterfuges, and disliked me for them, as I deserved. Let us say no more about it, than we would a cloudy day of a hundred years ago! As for me, I am so overwhelmed with joy, my spirits are running away with me!"

Bee's tact ended all recriminations, and turned the interrupted flow of conversation into the former pleasing channel. All expressed their gratification at the turn which things had taken, and congratulated Violet and Beatrice

over their fair prospects.

"Will it be convenient for you to sail on the tenth of next month, Violet?" asked Beatrice anxiously. "I have every arrangement made, and it is rather late to change; yet, I

think it might be managed if you wish."

"I am perfectly satisfied with your plans. I heartily coincide with everything. Please remember, Bee, that I am going with you, and act your own pleasure. The tenth is the day Hervey and Elva start upon their bridal trip to Europe; probably upon the same steamer. How opportune!"

In the solitude of her room that evening, Violet reviewed the events of the day. "The very thing," she mused, "against which I protested has happened. I said, 'Wonders will never cease,' when I invite Bee Moreland to accompany me. Strange to say, they have not; but stranger still is the fact, that I actually begged an invitation! Wise little Unie! I wonder if she foresaw what would happen! I think her reliance upon the Father of the universe is a

striking illustration of faith. She looks to Him for guidance in everything, and is never misled; while I have always considered the Creator, a mighty Potentate who interfered in human affairs, that He might give His subjects the necessary discipline! I find I have been grievously in error. Unie's life, as well as Alan's has been brightened by the star of hope; mine has been overshadowed with clouds of rebellion and unbelief. I must acknowledge their way is better than mine, if I would be true to my convictions."

Beatrice forgot all about her curiosity concerning Violet, in the exuberance of joy over the state of affairs. She communicated the good news to mamma and Aunt Ellie, before retiring. Her slumbers were sweet, and refreshing with

happy dreams of her loved ones.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WAVES OF JOY.

VIOLET and Beatrice remained two weeks at Oakhurst. They were almost inseparable in their new relations, and might easily have been taken for life-long friends. The time passed joyously away. The days were spent in pleasing intercourse, and sweet interchange of thought, till the details connected with the Summer's trip made it necessary for them to return to their homes.

In the meantime, Lucy accompanied by Hilda, had visited the Bradleys, and presented the generous offer of Violet Morriton to her sister Fannie. It was gratefully received, though the recipient could not understand why she should be so favored above all others. Her doubts were banished, however, when the matter concerning the sketches was laid before her.

Lucy told her of Unie's successful presentation of the "Lotus Leaves" to the public. She gave such an accurate description of the little one, so hopefully patient under all her affliction, that Fannie's heart went out to the unknown sufferer.

"Tell Miss Morriton, for me, Lucy, that I accept her kind offer, and will furnish all the sketches she desires, till she says enough. I already feel new life coursing throughout the veins, in contemplating the change; the realization will be as an oasis, in the desert to the weary traveler. I am really anxious to enter my new field. I was feeling so discouraged and useless, and utterly forsaken, that I was only a prey to morbid fears when you came. Indeed, I was fast becoming a hypochondriac," said Fannie. "How true, the saying, 'it is always the darkest before the dawn!"

The friendship between Hilda and Fannie was renewed with a promised visit during the Winter holidays. After a brief stay of two days, Hilda returned to Oakhurst at the same time Lucy and Fannie started for Morriton House.

Fannie's bright and energetic manner won the esteem of the Morritons, and they gladly welcomed her, extending the privileges of their beautiful home. Unie and Fannie felt the bond of friendship uniting them simultaneously. Fannie became the champion of the weaker. They passed the days in resting and planning about sketches for the "Lotus Leaves." Fannie thought by the time they were settled at Roselands, after all the excitement attached to the wedding had subsided, she should be able to commence the enticing work.

"It really seems as though another Elva had come to me!" exclaimed Unie one day, as they sat talking about the same things which had occupied the time previous to the sending forth of the artistic "Leaves." "How kindly our Father provides for us! Better than we can devise or even suggest! I missed Elva so much, I was a little lonely, and even dreaded the long quiet days at Roselands. And behold! before I can murmur, my heart's desire is granted, without my expressing a single wish! How can

one doubt the wisdom of Providence!"

Violet returned home in a far different frame of mind than that which she had departed with. The old restless look was replaced with one of contentment and peace. She appeared to have grown more beautiful, and the features bore the impress of a happy heart.

"How in the world did it happen that you changed your opinion concerning Mrs. Moreland?" inquired Mr. Morri-"Are you responsible for the change? Or is she? I never heard anything so remarkable in all my life! En-

lighten me, please!"

"Really, I don't know!" responded Violet with a laugh. "I cannot tell when, or how, the change happened; yet, it certainly did. You see, papa, I began to study her when she arrived at Mary's. I looked upon her as an interesting curiosity and was rewarded for the look. She not only became interesting, but fascinating. I found that I had either greatly misjudged her, or she had greatly changed.

I could not fully decide which. Possibly, there may have been a change in both. I had always considered her as one of the biggest frauds in existence; but on a closer acquaintance, I found the glaring defects of character not so hideous as I had imagined. Her married life seems to have been a sort of training school, bringing out the better part of her nature. The way in which she held out her own faults for ridicule completely mystified me. She seemed as transparent as ever, in her little flighty ways; yet, she unconsciously drew me to her; so strongly that I asked permission to accompany her, on her trip to Europe. Imagine, if you can, my suing for a favor from Bee Moreland! I even told that I had called her a 'Busy Bee,' in derision; she replied she wished I would continue; it would seem like old times, as it was one of Mort's pet names for her. She is trying to be a brave little woman, and bear her trouble and sorrow, from the promise to her husband. She speaks of Mortimer Moreland as cheerfully as though he were away on a visit, when all the time, I know her heart is breaking with its silent grief. She buried her husband and motherin-law in England; a little son is resting somewhere in Germany. She is going there to have his remains placed beside his father's. A sad mission you might suppose, but one which I think I shall enjoy, for the very reason that it is out of the ordinary. I know I shall enjoy the trip, she is so entertaining, with a perfect fund of humor, and a mania for conversation. I admire her, on the whole. You have my reasons; are they sufficiently plain?"

"Not wholly, my child!" answered the father. "It reminds me of the difference between 'tweedledum and tweedledee!' I should say that either the 'tables were turned upon you,' or that the 'scales' have fallen from your eyes! There is one consolation, a good hater makes a good lover! However, I am fully satisfied at the 'turn of the tide.' You both will be in good hands, as long as Hervey and Elva remain abroad, and possibly you may return with them. I trust so. What do you think, mother, about this

new scheme?" he asked, turning to Mrs. Morriton.

"I think most favorably of it," responded the mother. "Everything is being arranged so nicely for our benefit, that nothing beyond an overruling Providence could have devised it. Fannie Bradley has come to us, and is already filling Elva's place, with her sweet watch-care over Unie. We shall bear your absence better, Violet, from her presence. You are learning that life's greatest happiness is in doing good to others. See what waves of joy your little act of kindness to Lucy has caused. First, Lucy was relieved of her sorrow; then Fannie and her parents; it reached Hilda, and the Arthurs household; it sent a rolling wave of light and gladness to little Unie, and in fact to all our hearts, when it came in the form of Fannie Bradley to our midst. But, the greatest wave of all was that which rebounded to your own heart, and brought you in contact with Beatrice. We cannot tell how far these waves may extend; their circles may widen and expand through eternity. I rejoice with you, Violet, that you have secured such a suitable friend and companion."

"That settles the matter, then," said Mr. Morriton. "If mother is satisfied, we are; and I know, you have gained a vast amount of good, by your short trip to Boston, though I don't see it in the same way your mother does. I hope your trip to Europe may be as productive of happiness

as this one, only more so."

"Thank you, both, for your kind wishes," said Violet, well pleased with her parents' commendation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WEDDING BELLS.

Hervey and Harry Morriton turned their steps eastward on the first of May. They compassed the distance from California to New York, by easy journeys, reaching home in two weeks. Hervey was greatly improved; his health was established upon a firmer basis, than was thought possible a year ago. The bronzed traveler was very hopeful, and looked forward to an ultimate recovery. He attributed everything to Harry, stating that he never could have endured the privation of study, had it not been for his brother's watchful care. "I think," he remarked, "he should add the profession of nurse and physician, to his many talents. For I am fully convinced that a more efficient, sympathetic, and exacting one cannot be found among the whole faculty! He is quite an old fogy!"

The parents and Aunt Lida saw the wisdom in allowing the brothers the privilege of companionship. The need had been greater than they had supposed. It was clearly shown that Harry had not exaggerated, from the great re-

sults, and Hervey's own testimony.

"What he will do without me in the future," remarked Harry, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, "I cannot say. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' If I were not going to relinquish my care to another, I really should be as anxious as a hen over a chicken, about him. Joking aside, my dear people, he needs a guardian. He thinks no more of sitting in the worst draughts of air, if he is lost in a book, than a child would. I am going to offer my services to the Mountain Maid, for a future emergency. I flatter myself I am a good jailer."

"There is more truth than poetry,' in your words," remarked Aunt Lida, bestowing a loving glance upon her

favorite nephew.

"Thanks, Auntie!" exclaimed Harry, taking a chair

beside her, and throwing his head into her lap.

Aunt Lida took a piece of confectionery from her pocket, that vast receptacle of childish goodies, and placed it in Harry's mouth, with an affectionate pat upon the head.

"Oh, Auntie!" cried Harry, jumping up, "think of feeding six feet of humanity with peppermints! Never mind, though, it is just as good as though I was only four, instead of twenty."

After a few days' rest, Hervey left for the Berkshire Hills, the home of the Darlings. He wished to make the acquaintance of Elva's parents, trusting they would look favorably

upon him, as one of their own.

On his departure, Harry complained bitterly of his desertion. "What is to become of me?" he asked humorously. "I find myself suddenly deprived of a situation! Unie does not need me, and Hervey will not let me go with him! What shall I do? As long as I am obliged to remain, I guess I'll see what truth there is in that interesting fib of Unie's. I noticed a fire in those black eyes, which I should enjoy to set blazing. You seem so surprised, I had better relieve your suspense. I refer to Miss Fannie Isabelle Bradley!"

Harry's bright sallies of wit had relieved the anxious look upon his brother's face. In fact, their memory lingered

with him throughout his journey.

Elva's home was in a beautiful village, nestling among the green hills, in a peaceful valley beside the Deerfield River. The Darlings had been among the early settlers, being attracted to the spot by the fertile soil, rich timberland, and water facilities. They had never amassed a fortune, though they had been burdened with cares.

Eben Darling, Elva's father, was struggling on, in the same manner as his ancestors had done. It was sometimes very difficult to keep the preying wolf from the door. He had been obliged to turn his energies from cultivating the soil, to a more profitable occupation, in order to maintain

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a livelihood for his family. The Aunt's legacy to Elva had

been a blessed boon in many ways.

The marriage settlement, which was a surprise, enabled her to procure a trousseau suitable for a Morriton bride. Her taste led to an elegance of simplicity, rather than an

elaborate display of extravagance.

The eighth of June was the day selected for the wedding. It dawned upon the anxious hearts, bright and clear, without a cloud upon the horizon. The Morriton family, with the exception of Unie, were present to witness the happy event. Dr. Herbert was the best man, though Harry's officiousness might have conveyed a contrary impression to the beholder.

"I think I have the best right over this affair, as I was the instrument which brought you to the ark of safety, from which I trust you will never attempt to run away!" he remarked solemnly to Elva, as he extended his hand in

greeting upon his arrival.

The ceremony took place in the village church, at ten in the morning; it was tastefully decorated with wild flowers and ferns. Daisies with laurel branches were wreathed around the altar, in artistic beauty. A large bell of marguerites suspended from the ceiling was near the altar. The whole atmosphere was fragrant with June roses and lilies smiling from every available place. The decoration was the loving labor of the choir of which Elva had been a member since childhood. It showed in a small measure the high esteem in which they held their accomplished leader.

In the presence of a crowded audience, beneath the emblematic bell, Hervey and Elva pledged their sacred

vows of love, and entered upon a new pathway of life.

The bride was gowned in white satin and duchesse lace, which fell in soft filmy cascades, giving the appearance of a fairy created from the mist. The clear, distinct responses of the lady, however, proclaimed her to be mortal and corrected any error which might have arisen.

After holding a reception at the old home, the bridal

party departed for New York, amid showers of rice and best wishes.

Beatrice Moreland had been with the Morritons only a few days. Yet, even Aunt Lida said, "She fits in remarkably well for a stranger." Through her kindness, Mrs. Morriton had been enabled to be present at the marriage.

"Do not worry, dear Mrs. Morriton," said Beatrice in her persuading, fascinating way. "I can take Violet's place, and Aunt Lida and I will be a host within ourselves!"

The result was, that Beatrice obtained the victory, and the mother departed willingly acquiescent. The first move she made was to ask Aunt Lida to go with her to Unie's room. As soon as they were seated she explained her reason. "What do you both think about giving the bridal couple a surprising welcome on their return?" she asked. "We have only two days, I know, in which to prepare, but I know something novel might be furnished if we all 'took a hand,'" she continued, without allowing the others an opportunity of answering. "What do you think would be the best thing to do? Can either of you suggest anything?"

"As you are the inventor of the scheme," sagely remarked Aunt Lida, "I see no difficulty in your carrying it out. We will help in whatever manner we are able, though I have my hands full about matters concerning the reception. I may give a little advice, now and then. These convalescents I am afraid you will have to excuse. Let us know what the

great surprise is!"

"I have been looking over the drawing room, and think an alcove might be arranged in one corner. It could be covered with green, and flowers, making it a bower of roses, within which Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Morriton might receive the congratulations of their numerous friends. A frame of lightwood could be easily made; we might arrange asparagus ferns all over the rough material; with pink and white roses, making it a fairy's bower. We want fresh flowers, not wilted ones, they are suggestive of sorrow, and we can't have anything dismal. We could have the roses in little bottles of water, and tie them on at the last moment. Don't you think it would be lovely?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes!" answered Fannie and Unie. "It would be splen-

did!"

"It would be very nice, indeed," assented Aunt Lida,

"if you could accomplish it all."

"Never fear!" exclaimed Beatrice, "I will set Jimmie at work forthwith. I will oversee everything, and we will have it all ready for the roses by night. Tomorrow, we will gather them, and send for what we lack. After Jimmie gets through with his pounding, Unie can rest in the room, and witness the twining of the asparagus. I think Fannie, you could help about that part."

"Let me help about the roses, will you?" asked Unie, solicitously. "I can put them in the little bottles of water, for you. O, it will be splendid to have a rosy bower for

Elva!"

"There is no objection, provided you do not tire yourself," vouchsafed Aunt Lida.

Beatrice departed to find Jimmie, and put the plan into execution, saying as she went, "We will keep it a secret from them all, till they go into the room, and allow no one to enter but ourselves."

The proposition was fully carried out. Under Jimmie's hands a very substantial frame was erected, resting upon large beams entirely covered with soft emerald moss. Unie lay upon a couch throughout the long afternoon, and watched the progress of the work. "It is very beautiful, now, with its wealth of green, and what will it be, when we have the roses blooming upon it?" cried Unie rapturously, at the close of the day's labors.

The pleasure afforded the returning ones, when they beheld the drawing room, amply repaid for the small amount

of labor expended.

Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Morriton received the congratulations of their many friends, within the fragrant bower. The novel arrangement was admired by all; some spoke of it, among themselves, as a unique affair, and wondered

who the designer was.

On the following day they sailed for Europe, accompanied by Violet and Mrs. Moreland. Dr. Herbert and Harry escorted them to the large steamer which was to bear them across the Atlantic, and watched their departure.

As the steamer passed from view, Harry remarked, "Well, Doc, that Bee Moreland is a busy one! isn't she? You had better take the advice Samuel Weller gave his son; 'beware of widders!' I've heard widows were partial to doctors! So 'forewarned is forearmed!' Don't be caught napping!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN OCEAN CONCERT.

THE time for crossing the ocean was most favorable. Pleasant weather prevailed throughout the entire trip making the waters as placid as those of a lake. The Morriton party assembled in the grand saloon each day, and amused themselves in whatever manner inclination led.

One evening, Mr. and Mrs. Hervey were indulging in Elva's favorite game of halma. Violet and Beatrice were seated near by playing cribbage. Miss Gray, the captain's daughter, was watching the game with much interest, and listening to the music which come floating from the

grand piano.

"O, Vi, I wish you and Mrs. Hervey would favor us with a little real music!" cried Beatrice. "I am completely out of patience with the mixture of sounds called harmony, which have fallen from the fingers of the performers. Amateurs and professionals have, in turn, pounded that splendid instrument, till it has fairly groaned under the operation, to say nothing of afflicting the listeners with the torture. I get so tired of hearing the same old hackneyed tunes, I am almost tempted to try it myself; only the fear of increasing the discord prevents me. It would be such a pleasure, if you would!"

"Sorry to disappoint you, Bee! But I do not care to exhibit what little talent I possess to the promiscuous crowd of a steamer! You are too fastidious! If Elva and I endure it, why can't you?" answered Violet, con-

tinuing the game.

Shortly afterwards, Miss Gray left her seat, for a few moments, and returned before she had been missed. She went to her father, and begged that he would invite the bride, Mrs. Morriton, and her sister to favor the company with music, as she had learned they were professionals. The father promised to grant the request of his beautiful,

motherless child, as soon as possible.

"Miss Morriton, will you, and Mrs. Morriton kindly favor us with a few musical selections?" he asked, approach-

ing the astonished players.

"Really, Captain Gray, you must excuse me. I am not in the mood," answered Violet. "Have you not heard enough music already and become surfeited?"

"No, I have not," calmly replied the Captain. "I have

heard none since we left port."

"O, what a paradoxical statement, father!" said Hazel. "Explain yourself, please, for our enlightenment."

"Do not make me commit myself. Allow me the privi-

lege of a politician, my child."

"I am sorry to appear disobliging, Captain Gray, but you must excuse me, this time. Perhaps you may meet with success from Mrs. Morriton," she added.

"Excuse me, for interrupting your game, but I come to beg a small favor from your bride," he said, addressing Hervey. Turning to her he stated his request. "I am commissioned, Mrs. Morriton, to ask if you will entertain us with a little music?"

"Most willingly, Captain Gray, if it will give you any pleasure," replied Elva. "You are doing so much for our comfort I should be very glad to render you any little service that lies within my power. I have been longing to touch the keys of that fine instrument, but thought I would wait till the others had finished."

"Then you would have waited in vain; they will not cease till we reach the other shore," added the Captain with a sagacious twinkle of the eye. "I will have the piano moved to another part of the saloon, so I can hear, while I am on Receive my thanks for your kindness, in granting my request," he bowed and departed to his lookout station.

The piano was moved according to his directions, and Elva took her seat before it. Running her fingers over the keys caressingly, she played chords and scales a short time.

All recognized her skill and masterly touch, even from them. An old professor, sitting alone in his stateroom, caught something familiar about the sounds. "I am thankful," he mused, "there is some one on board who can play! Who is an artist! I have stopped my ears from the other trash! That's excellent!" he continued; "sounds like that little Darling girl, who was such a musical prodigy! I may as well creep out a little ways where I can hear more clearly!" He did so, being entirely concealed from the player by the crowd which had gathered around. played piece after piece from the grand old masters. listeners were held spellbound. The doors of the staterooms were opened, that the sick might enjoy the melodious sounds. Two hours passed away; she was so much engaged, that time made no impression upon her in its flight. "Violet," she said, "if you will accompany me, I will sing a little song for Captain Gray."

Violet could not refuse, and seated herself in Elva's place, convinced that it was a pleasure to give pleasure

unto others.

Mrs. Morriton's songs actually carried her audience by storm. Applause after applause greeted her, at the close of each selection with cries of "more! more!" The old Professor recognized the voice of his former pupil. "It is she! I could never mistake those tones!" he remarked as he rose, and walked toward the piano to meet her. He wedged his way through the crowd and stood waiting to express his thanks.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Miss Darling, on your success! I see you have lost nothing since you left my

care!" he said, extending his hand in welcome.

"Oh, Professor Strachauer!" exclaimed Elva, in surprise. "Where did you drop from? I did not know my old teacher was listening to me; if I had, I might have been a trifle nervous. Allow me to present my husband, Mr. Morriton, to you," she said, turning to Hervey.

"Accept my congratulations! I am pleased to make

your acquaintance, Mr. Morriton," he said, extending his hand, "though sorry to learn you will deprive the world of a true musician."

"I feel my soul thrill within me, at the sound of your voice, and I would like you to sing the sweet little song of the Shepherd Boy. Will you try it, Little One? Or, are you too weary?" asked the Professor.

"Not at all!" responded Elva. "I should be delighted

to sing again under your direction."

The Professor played the prelude; Elva sang the thrilling little song so pathetically that the audience were hushed to silence. They had no wish to applaud at the end of the stanzas, but waited expectantly for more. When the finale was reached and they were convinced there was no more, the applause was tremendous, and deafening. The whole piece was repeated as an encore for their gratification.

"Mrs. Morriton begs you will excuse her from further singing to-night, after she has given you a good-night song,"

said the Professor, turning to the assembled crowd.

"We will! we will!" they answered with one accord.

Elva sang that exquisite little gem, "Good-night, Sweet Dreams." The words fell upon the passengers like a benison from on high. "Good-night, sweet dreams. God bless

you, everywhere."

It was an appropriate ending of one of the grandest concerts ever held at sea. The rich blessing rang through the slumbers of the night. Some who had forgotten the silent Watcher over all, turned upon their pillows with a joyous heart, conscious of His faithful watchcare, saying truly, "He has blessed me everywhere."

Violet hummed the sweet strains lingering in her heart,

assured that God had blessed her, everywhere!

Every evening from that time was passed in the same enjoyable and profitable manner. Mrs. Hervey Morriton was not only considered the queen of song, but was worshiped as an angel by the admiring crew and passengers.

CHAPTER XXX.

"I THINK YOU HAVE SAVED MY REASON."

THE steamer reached Liverpool, the port of destination, in due season. A secret note of thankfulness ran through the heart of everyone that he would once more walk upon solid earth. Many were sorry to sever the pleasant ac-

quaintances which had been formed on shipboard.

Captain Gray said, "It is one of the nicest parties I ever conducted across the 'briny deep.' I wish I might take you all back. We have been favored by Providence with prosperous winds for our journey; but the happy feeling of unity which has prevailed, I am certain, is attributable to

Mrs. Hervey."

This was the sentiment of all. She received many thanks from her admirers as they were about to part. One very touching incident occurred; an elderly man approached her with an embarrassed air. "I beg you will pardon me for troubling you, but my little girl would like to see you, and thank you for the great joy which you have given her. She is too sick to come to you, and as a favor, asked if you would come to her. Will you grant her a few moments?" he asked beseechingly.

"Certainly, I will!" answered Elva.

Mr. Porter led the way to a state-room nearby; Elva found to her astonishment a young lady about her own age, who was suffering from the effects of a severe illness. "Ethel,

my dear, I have brought the lady to see you," he said.

"I am very glad to be able to thank you, Mrs. Morriton, for the great pleasure you have afforded me," said the sufferer. "I am troubled with insomnia; often I lie awake through the long hours of the night, and fall into a fitful doze in the morning, from which I awake at the least noise. But strange to say, your music had a most soothing effect upon my shattered nerves. While listening to your heavenly strains, I have fallen into a refreshing sleep which has

lasted for hours. In fact, I endeavored as hard to keep awake to listen to your melodious voice, as I had previously struggled to woo the god of sleep. I had nearly given up in despair, when you came to my rescue. I think you have saved my reason! If all the rhetorical figures of the language were summoned to my aid, they would be inadequate to express a tenth of my gratitude for your exceeding great kindness."

"You poor afflicted child!" said Elva, tenderly. "I fully understand your feelings. I know what it means to find sympathy among strangers. I too, have been afflicted."

"You see, Mrs. Morriton, the little one has been having a long, hard pull with sickness. The doctors recommended a sea voyage and a change of climate; so I dropped all business cares and came to look out for her. I wish I could find a quiet, pleasant spot somewhere near the coast. The southern part of this country is fine, I am told. I know Ethel will pull through all right as soon as we find it; but I hate to bother her about finding the right one," he added, by way of explanation.

"If you will allow me, Mr. Porter, I will ask a friend of our party to give you all the information you desire. She has spent many months here, and is well acquainted with

the people. She is a Mrs. Moreland."

"I wonder if she could be the Beatrice Somers, who married Mortimer Moreland?" said Ethel, greatly interested.

"She must be the same one, I know, as their names are similar. I will find her, that you may renew your friendship for the little time which we have left," said Mrs. Hervey.

"Ask your party to make me a flying call, if you wish,"

said Ethel, filled with new hope.

Hervey, Violet and Beatrice had been surprised when Elva left them to obey the summons of the anxious father. But they were more surprised when she returned and asked them to accompany her. Entering a large, commodious state-room, they saw the same gentleman sitting near a lady reclining upon a couch. She introduced them, as Mr.

Porter and daughter, to her husband, sister and friend,

reserving Mrs. Moreland till the last.

Beatrice advanced to the couch to see the occupant, and astonished them all by crying out, "Oh, you darling Ethel! To think of you being on this steamer all the time and never letting me know about it! How could you do it?"

"Because I was fast becoming a hypochondriac, I think," answered Ethel. "I felt so wretchedly I wanted to see, or hear no one. I wished to be left alone, and should have remained so, if it had not been for Mrs. Morriton's beautiful music. She carried me away to dreamy realms of bliss, which brought rest to my weary body. I was so tired, body, soul, and mind, that I could not rest. I was so thankful to the unknown lady who had benefited me, that I told papa I would like to thank her. And he, always willing to gratify every whim, went in search of her. Through her, I learned of you, Beatrice; so you will excuse me, won't you? and attribute all my idiosyncrasies to the freaks of an invalid?"

"Of course I will, you dear child," replied Beatrice. "We will avail ourselves of what time there is left, before we land. I flatter myself, though, that I was the innocent means of your enjoyment. I asked my friends to furnish the music in the presence of Hazel Gray, the Captain's daughter. I know she persuaded her father to invite them to entertain. It proved a good thought." She gave her an affectionate kiss, keeping up a steady flow of questions,

which no one attempted to answer.

Pausing for want of breath, she noticed the wondering looks of her companions, and deemed it necessary to enlighten them upon the subject. "You see," she remarked, turning and including them all by a single glance, "Ethel is the one dear friend I made, while I was staying with Aunt Ellie. Mort and I thought everything of Ethel. Where are you going to hide her, Mr. Porter, when you land?" she inquired of the father.

"That is just what I am trying to learn." said Mr. Porter. "You see, Ethel needs a quiet place and Mrs. Morriton

told us you could direct to one."

"Thank you, I am able to do so. I know of the nicest place you can find upon the earth. Dear, delightful Devon! I will give you a letter to a friend there, and you will be well-cared for." She explained the route fully to Mr. Porter, and gave him the names of two parties with whom she thought they would find accommodation.

"If you remain there," she continued, I shall be able to see you, as I must go there before returning. Good-bye, Ethel, you will soon lose your pale cheeks in this delightful place." With these encouraging words, Beatrice flitted

away to collect all her paraphernalia.

Violet's heart was filled with varied emotions while reaching the English shore. She experienced the joy of satisfaction that a long-desired wish had been granted; in fact, the one thing for which she had striven many years. Yet, the pleasure was mingled with regret; regret over days of sorrow; regret over sleepless nights; regret over wasted opportunities; regret over the lost happiness of ten long years; regret over the injury which she had given another; regret over the rejected blessing; but more than all, the regret of regrets over a misspent life. With the new light that had gradually dawned upon her life, she knew wherein she had erred. "I have struggled," she thought, "more than the patriarch of old. He fought only till the break of day, while I have waged the battle for years, before I would submit. What strange mortals we are, that we cannot receive our blessings in the right way, instead of trying the difficult unsurpassable road of self, which always ends in disaster."

In spite of all regrets, Violet felt very happy in the knowledge that she was in the same country as Alan Stuart. Could she have seen him she would have acknowledged the mistake of the past, with that nobleness of spirit which marks the true Christian character.

The Morritons decided to journey to London and spend a few weeks among its historical attractions. Beatrice, being so well informed was of valuable assistance to the party. Her careful study enabled her to furnish many

incidents, which were forgotten by the others.

One morning she surprised them by stating she should require the day to make Cousin Lan a flying visit. "It is necessary for me to see him and make the arrangements I told you of. I know you will excuse me, and I trust you will have a pleasant time. I may not return till late this

evening," she added in parting.

Violet had indulged a secret half-formed idea that "Cousin Lan" and Alan Stuart might in some inconceivable way, be one and the same person. "What a beautiful reality it would be if the ideal proved true!" she mused. "I think it must have been the description of this wonderful cousin and his similarity to Alan, which first drew me to Bee Moreland. But, no, it cannot be! It is impossible! It is too good to be true! I will banish the thought from my mind. Yet there is something mysterious about him, as she would not even tell me his name, when I inquired. Alan I am convinced cannot be many miles away. I would like to ascertain, but will not force myself to make personal inquiries. But, Bee's cousin must be miles away, as she requires not only the whole day but a part of the night, to make her call. How absurd I am to allow myself to build air-castles again!"

Violet felt depressed throughout the entire day. She allowed Hervey and Elva to go sight seeing without her. She had no desire to go without Beatrice, who always kept her so busily engaged, there was but little time to brood over the past. She begged the privilege of remaining to answer an accumulated pile of letters. Yet, the urgent necessity of correspondence could not prevent her from an absorbing

reverie. The letters remained unanswered, that day.

Mrs. Moreland returned about nine o'clock in the evening, much to the evident joy of all. "I am rejoiced to welcome you back, Bee," said Violet. "I have missed you all day."

"I am equally delighted to get back," returned Beatrice, wondering what her friends would say if they only knew where she had been, and whom she had seen.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"TELL ME ALL ABOUT HER."

BEATRICE'S heart was filled with conflicting emotions at the thought of meeting her husband's relative. Many changes had taken place since she first came to England as a happy bride. Four years had not wholly passed, and, yet, it seemed like a decade. But, in the midst of these sad reflections, came the comforting assurance that she had found a dear friend. One, who had made the dreaded journey very pleasant in many little ways. The heart overflowed with love for Violet. What had once been idle speculation to satisfy a prying curiosity, was lost in the blessed bond of sympathy. She wished she might be of service, that she could in some way contribute to her welfare. For strong and self-reliant as Violet Morriton always appeared, Beatrice saw, or fancied she did, signs of a deep undercurrent of sadness within the unfathomable depths of the expressive eyes. "I can't seem to do anything," she murmured, "without betraying my watchfulness, so I will let the whole matter drop!" This wise conclusion found Beatrice at her journey's end.

Alan Stuart met his visitor as she alighted from the cab, and led her into the cozy sitting-room. "I am so glad to welcome you to England again, Cousin Beatrice," he exclaimed, as she was removing her wraps. "It is very refreshing to meet one from home. I know you will pardon my impatience, when I ask you to tell me about mother and Evelyn. How did you find them, and how are they look-

ing?"

"They were both well, but longing to see you," she answered. "Cousin Evie told me she was afraid sometimes Aunt Sarah would insist upon crossing the ocean to be with her boy once more. Her physician has warned her against the attempt; yet, the yearning is so strong, Evie thinks

it will overcome the warning, and fears the worst. Oh, Cousin Lan, if you could only send some word to comfort

and quiet them!"

"God grant that it may be in my power!" cried the stricken man. "Excuse me, Beatrice, for thinking of myself and being so remiss in your welfare. What mission has brought you again to this land and what can I do

to assist you?"

Beatrice explained the purpose of her visit and gave him her full confidence. "You may think me strange, but I know I could rest easier if I was assured all my dear ones were reposing side by side in the peaceful vales of Devon. I knew that you would assist me, and arrange some matters better than I could. So, if you will kindly look after things here, I will make the necessary arrangements in Germany."

"I will gladly do anything that lies in my power to assist you," responded Alan. "I shall be most happy in rendering you this assistance, though it is a sad mission. I deeply sympathize with you in this triple bereavement. This is my first knowledge of a little son. Truly, you have been grievously afflicted! Like the patient Ruth you have borne sorrow with a trusting heart! Like her, you clung to the sorrowing mother, and never forsook her! Like her, you made her people, your people, and her God, your God! And like her, may you receive the rich blessings of prosperity!"

The words fell like a benediction upon the stricken woman, assuaging her deep sorrow. "Thank you, so much, Cousin Lan, for your great kindness. You are just like Mort in your ways, and remind me so much of him, that I fancy if I were to close my eyes, and open them,

I should find him in your place!"

"Would that you might!" said Alan. "But I know of no magician who possesses the power of incarnation, so our fancies are no avail." Anxious to turn the drift of conversation, he inquired concerning the friends she had left in the great city.

"How are the ladies with whom you are traveling?" he asked solicitously. "I do not think you mentioned their names in your letter; if so, I have forgotten the fact. After your return from Germany, I might be of some assistance in showing the beauties of this wonderful land. You may invite them to 'Happy Haven,' if you think it best."

The longed-for, yet dreaded moment had arrived. She hesitated a moment, then looked Alan Stuart frankly in the

face, and answered, "I came with the Morritons."

"What!" exclaimed Alan startled from his usual repose

of manner. "Did I understand you correctly?"

"Yes," calmly responded Beatrice, not in the least surprised at the result of her information. Seeing that Alan's question required an answer, she continued, "Mr. and Mrs. Hervey Morriton are on their bridal trip; making a tour of the Isles, and the Continent. Hervy married a Miss Darling, a music teacher of notoriety. She really is a musical wonder, and I know she will sing for you at 'Happy Haven,' if it lies within her power, as she is very accommodating. Violet and I came in company with them."

"Violet Morriton in England!" he cried to himself. "My God, has she come here to torture me! God forbid! It cannot be! Give me grace, Oh, Father, to bear this new trial!" he pleaded. Raising his eyes he met Beatrice's tender, compassionate look, and exclaimed from the very anguish of his soul, "Oh, Cousin Bee, do go on! Don't you see I am starving for news of her! Tell me all about her! How does she look, and is she the same? You must excuse me for being so upset over your information, as I am not well this morning and the shock has been too much for me."

"Perhaps I had better defer all further conversation on the subject till some other time. I am sorry to distress

you," she answered.

"No! no!" protested Alan. "Let me hear all, now! It is better than to stir the dregs at another time, when they have become settled!"

"I had not seen Violet for several years, till I met her, a few weeks ago at Mrs. Arthurs' home. I found her as beautiful as ever, only more so. I had heard her spoken of as being 'marble-hearted,' but saw it was a mistake. I had always admired her, but hitherto, she had always repulsed me. Strange to say, at this time, we became attracted to each other. I knew that you and Violet had been separated from some unknown cause, on the eve of your marriage. After I met you, here, I wondered what the trouble could be, and I asked Mort if he knew the rea-I never shall forget his reproof, and I let the matter drop, though I formed my own idea as to the erring one. You see I was debarred from speaking to you about it, and I would just as soon have thought of addressing the sphynx for information, as to question Violet upon the issue. I am sorry for you both; you are the dearest friends to me, on earth, and I wish it lay in my power to bring you happiness. What can I say, or do for you?"

"You can tell me more!" said Alan. "Tell me all, about her! Tell me why she came here! Tell me what she does! Tell me everything! Does she know that Mortimer was my cousin? Have you told her of the relationship?"

"No, I have not!" replied Beatrice. "I do not think she even suspects such a thing. Mrs. Arthurs and her daughters wished to hear about my European trip. I acceded to their request, and told them everything of interest. I could not refrain from speaking of your great work, at 'Happy Haven,' and the pleasant days we spent there. I did not mention the name of the boys' benefactor, though Violet asked it. From some inexplicable reason, I refrained, and led her to think I did not notice the question. She did not repeat it, so I was saved from further prevarication. I have thought, sometimes, that she might associate the Cousin Lan of my narrative with Alan Stuart. If she has, no one is the wiser for it, as she keeps her own counsel. Now, I think of it, I must date her friendship from that time! She sat apparently unmoved through all

the long, sad recital. She expressed no words of sympathy, and I was censuring myself for being so wearisome in portraying the family history. If she had been a hundred miles away she could have manifested no less interest. deemed it advisable to leave her in the deep oblivious state into which she had penetrated, when she turned to me, and nearly upset my equilibrium of good sense by asking if I would take her to Europe with me? It really did take away my breath for a moment! You may imagine my surprise! It was too good to be true! When I found she really meant it, my joy could not be restrained. The dread of the lonely voyage was removed through no effort of mine. And though my mission was very sad, I felt there would be much enjoyment in her company. So far, it has been greater than I had anticipated. In some unknown way, my sorrows become less, instead of larger. I attribute it to Violet's presence, and comforting counsel. I think she has changed from what she formerly was. thinks the same of me. Perhaps, we both have grown wiser, if not better, with the passing years. We may have learned that charity is better censure for another's faults."

"God grant it may be so!" said Alan.

"I don't think of anything more, Cousin Lan," said Beatrice; "unless it is a very touching incident which took place, just before we landed." She related the story of finding the Porters, and ended by saying, "You see, Violet and Mrs. Hervey were both instrumental in soothing the invalid, and in enabling me to send them to dear old Devon. I wish I might help you a little! Won't you let me?"

"Most willingly, I would!" assented Alan, "if it were possible! I know of no earthly power that can bridge the yawning abyss. Only He who notes the sparrow's fall can

lead us in the paths of peace for His name's sake!"

"Now, Cousin Lan, I don't wish to pry into your secrets, or Violet's either, but I would dearly love to ask you one question, if you will not think me worse than Eve."

"I gladly grant the permission;" answered Alan, little dreaming what was waiting upon his inquisitor's tongue.

"Aren't you and Violet engaged?" queried Beatrice,

availing herself of the granted permission.

"Certainly not!" replied Alan. "We are as widely separated as strangers. I have never received one word from her since we parted in the long ago. What could have suggested such an impossibility?"

"Nothing; only that Violet wears the engagement ring, and I thought it might possibly be," she answered from a philo-

sophical standpoint.

"I am utterly incredulous as regards your statement, Beatrice," retorted Alan. "You must have been mistaken."

"No, I was not," she earnestly affirmed. "I can assure you to the contrary. I have seen the inside of the ring. A few days ago, after returning from a pleasure trip, Violet and I entered our private parlor, at the hotel. We removed our wraps, gloves, and hats, and seated ourselves to recover from the day's fatigue. In the midst of our cozy chat, Violet startled me by springing up, and exclaiming, 'Oh, Bee, I have lost my ring!' She felt very anxious about its loss. I tried to comfort her by saying perhaps she had not worn it that day. She assured me that she had, and stated that she never removed it. 'I will go to my room and make a thorough search, as it might have dropped from my

finger; it is a little loose,' she said, and left me.

"I felt an almost uncontrollable desire to learn the history of that little golden token. I knew that it must be an interesting one, from Violet's great anxiety. I jumped up, and began searching, as if my life depended upon it. I moved and looked carefully under every article of furniture which came within my power. I think I even went beyond the scrutiny of the prim New England housewives, in my thorough search. I had given up in despair when a happy thought ran through my brain. I acted upon it, and found the coveted treasure. It was lying concealed in one of the fingers of the glove. As I took it from its hiding place, I saw these words: Alan—Mizpah—Violet. I was convinced. My suspicions were verified. I felt I must intrude upon Violet's privacy and restore her property.

"I did so, and the joy which she expressed more than

repaid the pains I had taken.

"Thank you, so much, Bee!' she cried, kissing me affectionately. 'What should I do without you! You have proved a veritable blessing. I prize this ring more than all the jewels in my possession. It is a memento from a very dear friend. Sometime, perhaps, I may tell you its secret.' Tears of happiness filled her eyes, as we returned to the parlor.

""What a topsy-turvy appearance this room presents!" she exclaimed, as she attempted to roll an easy chair into

position. 'What is the matter?'

"'Nothing!' I meekly replied. 'I have only been hunting for lost goods, when there was no necessity, as they were close at hand.'"

"My explanation restored our usual state of enjoyment, and we took up the broken thread of conversation, though

the knowledge of the affair has never left me.

"This story must convince you, Alan! What other proof is necessary! Can there be any? Don't the fact prove that Violet considers herself bound to you? Oh, that I might be able to remove the barrier existing between you two!"

"God be praised!" ejaculated Alan. "It is true! No other than myself gave that ring to Violet. Dear Beatrice, you have brought me good news, indeed. It has burst like a ray of sunshine athwart a cloudy sky. As pearly drops of dew refresh the parching earth, so your cheering words have refreshed my thirsting heart! The sunshine brings happiness; the dew sustains; blessed truths of revelation! May I never faint. Oh, Father, while Thy truth remains!"

"Cousin Lan, why don't you call on us?" said Beatrice, interrupting his prayer. It would be the most natural thing to do in the world, don't you think so?"

"I cannot agree with you! Under the existing circumstances, it would be very improper for me to do so! You

do not understand why I cannot intrude upon your friend; but, let me assure you, if it lay within my power, I would gladly avail myself of your kind invitation. I shall patiently wait, and trust till the way is opened. So much has been granted, more than I ever dared to hope for, that my faith is strengthened. I am encouraged to press on in the Master's service. His Hand may lift the veil and allow me to enjoy the golden fruition of hope! And, now, my dear little peace-maker, let me say, in conclusion, it is better to let the matter rest where it is. You can use your own judgment as regards the revelation of my identity. Should you, at any time, make it known, and Violet expresses a wish to see me, tell her, I am patiently waiting. She will readily understand my meaning. Until that time arrives, keep the message. Let me hear of your movements, and I will render any assistance within my power. I hope to meet you, again, before you return to America. I will make all the necessary arrangements at Devon."

Alan accompanied Beatrice to the city and even to the hotel where she was stopping. He remained in the cab till he saw her enter the house in safety; then hurried away

to catch the last train for home.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THOU SHALT FIND IT AFTER MANY DAYS."

BEATRICE and Violet were disappointed in leaving London. Each felt discouraged over her own secret failures. Beatrice had failed, as we have seen, in the endeavor of reconciliation. She felt that, in a measure, her visit to Cousin Lan was lost. She had met him with the brightest of hopes; she left him carrying the same hopes, but their buoyancy had fallen, and they were very burdensome.

Violet on the other hand, had been unsuccessful in gaining any real knowledge concerning Alan Stuart. She knew no more of his work, and the scene of his labors, than she did at home. She was too sensitive to make direct inquiries, or seek information in the right quarter. The places selected for the tourists did not lead to his vicinity; so, she was prohibited from obtaining any glimpse of the great philanthropist, or his works.

The trip to Paris came as a relief to both. Mr. and Mrs. Hervey thought they would like to spend some time in the beautiful city and its vicinity. It was Elva's first visit to the gay metropolis, and she entered fully into the enjoyment of everything with that zeal which always charac-

terizes the novice.

Beatrice remained only a day with them, being very anxious to visit the Herrs. She promised to join them, in a week, and travel through Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Violet accompanied her.

The journey led through a pleasant country. Yet, its varied scenery attracted but a passing notice from either of the two ladies. Sad memories filled the lonely heart as Beatrice passed through the scenes of her former happiness.

Violet was busy with her own reflections, and did not care for conversation. She had arrived at that point of self-examination which permitted a fair judgment. The scales had fallen from her eyes, allowing a clear vision. In the new light which had burst upon her soul in glorious splendor, she saw the fault was all her own. Before its searching rays, the old imaginary wrongs shriveled and faded away; she knew her hand, alone had ruthlessly marred her life. Amid the harrowing thoughts came the words of the poet Whittier,

> "For of sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

Beatrice and Violet reached the little German village of L—, in the early part of the evening and proceeded to the home of the Herrs. They were met by Lena who astonished them by exclaiming, "Oh, Mrs. Moreland, I am so glad

you have come!"

"I knew you would be," said Beatrice. "I felt an irresistible longing to see you all, and the dear old place once more. So, I persuaded my friend, Miss Morriton, to come with me. I hope you can accommodate us with rooms for a few days. Do sit down, and tell us all about everything. Has little Eddie entirely recovered? Where is he? And—"

"Excuse me, please, Mrs. Moreland," said Lena, interrupting the steady stream of questions. Did you not come in answer to my numerous letters? Have you received no word from me? Do you know nothing about the little boy? Have you seen no advertisements to you in the papers?"

"No, indeed! I have seen neither letters nor notices! I have received no letters from you for nearly a year. The one you wrote about Eddie was very encouraging, and I thought by this time he would be hale and strong. Explain the meaning of your mysterious questions, and set

my heart to rest, Lena, dear."

"Oh, Mrs. Moreland, I was not thinking of my boy, who has been saved through the great kindness of your husband,

but of your own little one. He lives, and is improving daily. He is very cunning and dear to me. I love him as my own, and shall be sorry to part with him."

"My baby alive!" cried Beatrice incredulously. "Impossible! They told me he was dead! That he died of

hemorrhage, or something like it!"

"Dr. B— thought so, at first, and we all did. We even went so far as to have a little place prepared for him, in our lot. The baby looked so life-like, I spoke to the doctor about it. He said, 'It may be possible, but not probable. No child can survive after such a severe hemorrhage! If it were possible, he would be an idiot! Better a painless death than hopeless imbecility!' I told him I wished he would allow me to try. He directed me to administer a drop of brandy every hour, and note carefully the result; also to watch closely against another hemorrhage. I followed his instructions minutely and when he returned in a few hours, he informed me that I had saved the tiny life! He remarked that it was very frail, and there was a chance of recovery, though the odds were against it. 'If he survives, another will be added to the list of unfortunates.'

"I wished to communicate the good news to Mr. Moreland, but the Doctor would not allow it upon any consideration. 'We will wait and see,' he said. 'Nothing can be gained or lost. He considers his son dead, and a few days longer can make no difference. The mother does not realize her loss, so you will follow my directions. I will give the case very close attention, but dare not promise more than I have told you. Take the infant to your room, and see that it disturbs no one. It is too weak at present to test its lungs. Caution your mother about the case.'

"I enlisted the services of the old sexton to replace the earth which had been removed in the cemetery. He was old and childish, and really supposed he was making a grave. It also conveyed the same knowledge to the curious public, Even Mr. Moreland visited what he supposed to

be his baby's grave, before leaving us. I hope, Mrs. More-

land, that you are convinced."

"I am!" cried Beatrice. "Take me to my boy at once! Let me clasp him in my arms! I shall believe then! Come, Violet, and see this miracle!"

They followed Lena to an upper room, and beheld a child sleeping quietly within its crib with the rosy bloom of health upon its cheeks. "Oh, my precious boy!" cried Beatrice, rushing to the crib; seizing the little one, she clasped him close to her bosom, and nearly smothered him with kisses.

The child roused from its slumbers by such unusual actions, opened its eyes in surprise. He looked up with a sweet smile and faintly lisped "mamma," then closed his drowsy lids in sleep.

"Oh, Lena, have you told him about his parents?"

she asked, as she sat down with the sleeping child.

"Yes, I have daily instilled the knowledge into his little mind, though I think he does not fully comprehend it yet," answered Lena, conscientiously. "He calls me mamma."

"Why shouldn't he?" asked Beatrice. "You are his foster-mother. I wish Mort could have been spared to see this day! But, perhaps, he knows more about it than I do. Now, tell me all about it. When did the physician remove his restrictions and allow you to send the thrilling intelligence?"

"Nearly six months ago," answered Lena. "He watched him as closely as his practice would permit, often visiting him, two and three times a day. You may remember, I was away from home when you left; that I was taking charge of a very serious case. Baby Moreland was my patient, and needed my services more than his mother, who was convalescent. "When you began to improve, and commenced questioning about the little one, my hardship began. I did not know how to deceive you, and baby had not gained very much then. The doctor said it would be better to remove the child to another place while you remained. That explains the reason of my leaving you to

the care of another. I felt I could never let you depart without betraying the whole matter. As soon as I received permission, I wrote you a letter telling the glad news. I sent to England. After a while, receiving no answer, I wrote again; the first letter was returned with the statement that no such person was there. Then I thought of advertising in the English and German papers. I have done so regularly once in three or four weeks. I have also, sent letters to France, where I knew you had resided, but all to no avail; they were returned with the same report. I knew the attempt to find you in America would be as useless as the others had been. Yet, I had decided if I did not hear from you soon to send word to a cousin in Boston, and have him insert notices in the leading papers. I have left no stone unturned that might reveal the truth."

"I can never thank you enough, dear Lena, for your faithfulness!" said Beatrice. "This must explain the great longing which filled my very soul at times and the irresistible drawing which I could not smother. I came blindly to perform a sad mission; I imagined I could rest easier if all my loved ones were together in the peaceful shades of Devon. I came to make the arrangement, and see you all, once more. And, lo! all my sorrow is turned to joy! 'Praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!' Truly, the bread, which Mort cast upon the waters, has been found after

many days!"

A portion of the ample provision which Mortimer Moreland had so generously made for little Eddie Herr had been used for his own son. The cup of cold water given in the Master's name had met its reward.

"My great happiness is making me forgetful of others, I am afraid," said Beatrice. Lena, will you ask your mother and Eddie to make me a call? I am afraid of disturbing baby, and cannot go to them."

Mrs. Herr and the grandson gladly accepted the invitation, and extended a warm hand of welcome and congrat-

ulation.

Eddie was greatly changed from the little cripple of two years ago. The wish of his life had been granted him;

he could walk and run like other boys.

Mrs. Herr's large motherly heart overflowed with joy for the happy little mother. "I told Lena everything would come out all right, if she let the Lord have His own way! There is no use in fighting against His will. We might just as well submit, first as last. We all have to, any way! I am glad, dearie, you have your little lad again, though I shall be loth to part with him. May the blessing of heaven rest upon you and yours! The great Father has grievously afflicted you! He has removed the strong protecting arm of husband and father! Yet He has not left you comfortless, nor forsaken you! He has graciously restored the little babe. He fanned the tiny spark with His own breath, and would not allow it to die. He comes to you as a rich legacy. May he follow in the footsteps of his father, and become a noble-hearted man! Your arms are no longer empty; the work of training your son lies before you. May you bring him up in the 'fear and admonition of the Lord!

The words of Mother Herr fell like a benediction upon the joyful mother. "Thank you!" was all she could utter,

through her tears of joy.

Shortly afterwards she left the room with Eddie. Lena followed, excusing herself on the plea of household matters.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Cousin Lan's Message.

"VIOLET, if you don't mind, I would like to hold baby till he wakes. I want to see whom he looks like. I can trace Mort's resemblance in his features, but I did not catch the color of the eyes. You will not feel neglected, will you?" Beatrice asked.

"Not in the least!" answered Violet. "I was thinking very deeply of Mrs. Herr's blessing upon you, and the truth of her words. I felt as though she was uttering them

for me."

"Yes, they were applicable to any one. What a blessed old soul she is!" remarked Beatrice, changing the position of the child, in order that her arm might be relieved of the weight upon it.

The act roused the child from his sleep, and he gazed into the mother's face with wonderment. "Oh, Violet!" exclaimed Beatrice; "he has Alan's eyes! Yes, he resem-

bles Alan more than Mort!" she added.

"Do you mean my Alan?" asked Violet betraying un-

consciously the heart's long-hidden secret.

"Yes," calmly answered Beatrice, seeing that an opportune moment had arrived. "Your Alan is the only one I know! He is Mortimer's own cousin, and the two resembled each other so closely it was hard for a stranger to distinguish them apart. Do look, Violet, and see if I am not right! See if he isn't the image of Alan Stuart!"

Violet obeyed the request, and found the statement coincided with her own vision. "You are right, Bee, I see the resemblance," she said, in those sad tones which

one uses when speaking of the dead.

"Would you like to hold him a little while?" asked Beatrice as though she was granting a great favor.

"No I thank you, Bee. I am always afraid to touch a

baby for fear I may break it, or let it fall," she replied

shrinking from its side.

"Oh, my baby has passed that stage of existence!" said Beatrice, with grave assurance. He is getting to be quite a young man. He can walk about quite steadily. I think I shall call him Theo," she continued. "You see his name is Mortimer Theodore. I could never call him for his father; it would seem as though I was calling Mort from heaven. So I shall use the middle name, wouldn't you?"

"I suppose so," answered Violet.

The sad tones of the answer drew Beatrice's attention from her child to Violet. "Dear Vi, I am so sorry for you! Can't we right the trouble? Can't you forgive Alan? Look into my Theo's eyes and see if you cannot?"

"You labor under a grave mistake, Bee, I have nothing to forgive. I wish I could tell you the story, but I feel unequal to the task to-night. I can only say that I am the one

who has wrecked two happy lives."

"Pooh!" said Beatrice. "Don't cherish any such delusion! Suppose you did run onto the shoals, through a mistake, is there any reason why you should stay there?"

"Alas, Bee! you do not understand. I am afraid I never can be rescued from the dangerous position in which

I have hedged myself for so many years."

"Understand!" reiterated Beatrice. "I understand enough to assure you of happiness, and from many things, that you and Alan are both unhappy. What more could I gain if either of you were to rehearse all the harrowing scenes of your life. Whatever unpleasantness there may have been is no concern of mine. If you are the erring one, acknowledge it. It is easy to seek forgiveness when one has done wrong; it brings such a blessed feeling of satisfaction. Cousin Lan, I know, will grant you absolution from any wrong."

"Then Cousin Lan and Alan are one and the same person!" said Violet. "Tell me, Bee, all about him; how he looks and so forth. Did you tell him I was with you?"

"I told you everything, Vi, dear, when I told you of that 'mysterious Cousin Lan' who was devoting his life to doing good to others. You may remember that I said he looked as though he had some great sorrow. He looks the same now, as then; only he has grown sadder, and looks older; I actually saw gray hairs around his temples. He was much affected by the information that you were here. I wished you could have seen him; he looked so downhearted, you would have pitied him. Then he tries to bear his grief or disappointment, or whatever you may term it so

patiently my very soul goes out to him in sympathy."

"I think, Vi dear, you two are living at cross purposes. I seem to be a go-between with you both. First, he seeks all the information I can furnish concerning you. you do the same in regard to him. I related the incident connected with the ring; your anxiety over its loss, and your exultation at its restoration. I even told him your remarks when you placed it again upon your finger. And, I also said, I had seen the inscription which it bore. You may think me an old 'Poll Pry', Violet, but I am awful glad I looked at it; it confirmed what I had suspected for some It brought the first ray of light and hope upon Alan's brow. At first he could not trust his ears. He was utterly incredulous! Talk about having faith, I think a minister is the most faithless of all mortals! After many repetitions of the same he was finally convinced. Then he was so exhilarated, I should not have been surprised if he had danced for joy. He murmured a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

"Matters were adjusting themselves so finely, I invited Cousin Lan to call upon us. When, lo! all my endeavors were fruitless! He met them with a firm though gentle refusal. He said something like being 'debarred from such a privilege.' Further remonstrance was useless, and I was obliged to return as I had come with the difficulty no nearer a settlement. As I was about to depart he sent a message to you. 'Tell Violet, if she ever speaks of me, that I am

patiently waiting.' He added that you would understand his meaning, and I saw that any further concession would

not be granted."

"I am extremely grateful to you, Bee, for your sympathy, and great kindness. Alan's message is of priceless value. It restores me to the old place in his affections. I wish I might see him, and remove the barrier which pride has thrown between us. What would you advise me to do?" she asked anxiously.

"From what I know of the matter, I would advise you

to do as the children do," answered Beatrice demurely.

"What is that?" asked Violet expectingly.

"They always kiss and make up; it might be an amicable

adjustment in your case," she added.

"Do be serious, Bee! I am in too perilous a situation to be met with such a frivolous manner. Can you suggest

nothing?"

"Forgive me, Vi, but remember that child-like simplicity is one of the first requisites of a Christian character. I was simply suggesting the easiest way out of the labyrinth. The only way remaining is to go to him, and satisfy the demands of conscience. I will go as your chaperon if you wish."

"Will you, really, Bee?" Will you leave your newfound treasure to go with me? I am too selfish to require it!"

"Not at all!" cheerfully replied Beatrice. "I am so happy myself, I would like others to be so. And, if such a small thing as my accompanying you to England can give you happiness, I am more than pleased to render my services. As to leaving my little one, I shall have no anxiety. Lena can take better care of him than I can, and I shall not worry in the least, I can assure you."

"Then we will go! Alan is patiently waiting! We will relieve his faithful watch! When shall we start?" she

asked.

"To-morrow morning, if you like," replied Beatrice.

"The proper time to remedy a wrong is when one is in the repentant mood. The sooner the better. I will inform the family of our decision, explaining that a matter of business calls me away. I am reminded that I am teaching my boy acts of subordination, by holding him when he is asleep. He will expect it, another time, and rebel if he can't have his way. I wish you would find Lena, and ask her to come and relieve me."

Beatrice informed Lena of the plans for the next day, saying she had found it necessary to return to London at once on account of very important business. She would leave her Cousin Lan's address, in case she required it, though she hoped to keep her informed concerning her whereabouts. "I may return in a week or two," she said. "I cannot tell yet. Now, Lena, can I send a message to London to-night?"

She was informed that she must wait till morning. Lena was greatly astonished when Beatrice informed her, that they would require only one room as they wished to sleep

together and talk over things, like girls.

The wish was granted; they shared the same bed. "I am too happy to sleep!" said Beatrice. "I can understand the feelings of that poor Zidonian widow whose son the Prophet restored. How happy she must have felt!"

"Yes," assented Violet. "Though I do not recall the fact. I am very ignorant of Bible stories. I have only faint glimmerings of the beautiful truths falling from mamma's gentle lips, when I was a little child. The wonderful events are strangely mingled with the fairy tales of

youth. I wish you would refresh my memory."

Beatrice related the incidents connected with Elijah's visit to Zarephath. Violet listened with great interest. The recital carried her back to the scenes of childhood, when the heart was pure and innocent, and bright with its implicit faith. In looking through the vistas of life, she could say with Solomon. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor

the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"

"Yes, there are many points of resemblance in your family history," resumed Violet. "Both have seen the miraculous power of God displayed in the restoration of the only son. While Mr. Moreland's wise provision kept the oil and meal from wasting away. I cannot sleep; but it is not from happiness, rather the want of it. My brain is too busy with retrospection and it brings only regret."

Violet and Beatrice talked on through the silent watches of the night. The first gray streaks of dawn were stealing softly across the eastern horizon, ere they closed their eyes

in sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. BUTLER'S RESENTMENT.

BEATRICE and Violet departed on their journey at an early hour on the following morning. They were too much excited over the recent events to feel the need of sleep. At the parting, each gave little Theo Moreland a most affectionate embrace which he received with great wonderment.

Beatrice sent a telegram to Cousin Lan, telling him of her intentions. It was rather an ambiguous dispatch, and ran as follows, "Do nothing till you hear from me. Have received a great surprise. Will see you soon." "There," she said, after reading it to Violet, "it will prepare him for something, he won't know what."

"I agree with you," said Violet. "For a more unin-

telligible message I never heard."

The day was passed in retracing the journey of the previous day. Nothing out of the ordinary presented itself. At night they reached Paris, and proceeded to the hotel

where they had left their companions.

Mr. and Mrs. Hervey welcomed their return with joy though greatly surprised. Beatrice explained the situation, telling of the great blessing which had been bestowed upon her life, and concluded by saying, "It makes it absolutely necessary for me to go to London. I have important business to transact with Cousin Lan and Violet will accompany me."

"What an anomaly you are!" exclaimed Violet, when they were alone. "You are so apparently open in your communications, and yet so mysterious. I think you would excel as an expert in the detective profession. Aren't you

going to London wholly on my account?" she asked.

"Not by any means!" protested Beatrice. "I really must see Cousin Lan about baby. I want his advice about many things. I look upon him as my son's guardian. I know Mort would have desired it."

"But," persisted Violet, "could you not have arranged

matters by letter or telegram?"

"No, indeed!" she responded. "I never do business in that way, when I can interview the party. And what better time than the present, could there possibly be! I trust, Vi, dear, you are not looking backward, after putting your hand to the plow."

"No," reluctantly answered Violet, convinced against her will. "But, I am learning that you are an enigma

which baffles all solution."

"Let me give you a little advice," said Beatrice with a solemn air. "Don't try, it will be utterly useless as I don't know my own mind twenty-four hours ahead."

After a night's rest, Violet and Beatrice bade the Morritons adieu, the second time, and resumed their journey. The day passed pleasantly away; good connections were

enabling them to reach the parsonage by nightfall.

Mrs. Butler, the housekeeper, was amazed to find Mrs. Moreland when she answered the bell. "Do come right in, with your friend, my dear," she exclaimed delightfully. "Mr. Stuart is out on an errand of mercy, but will soon be here. Make yourselves comfortable in the sitting-room, while I get you a cup of tea." She bustled around the orderly room, upsetting its precision, and chatting all the while. "I am so glad you have come, dearie, it will cheer the parson up. He has been very quiet and gloomy of late, as though something was preying on his mind," she remarked, leaving the room.

"What a change a few hours will make in one's destiny," said Beatrice. "A little while ago, I was a broken-hearted woman. To-day I am one of the happiest of mothers."

"Yes," assented Violet, "a nation may rise or fall in a

day."

"If you will excuse me a few minutes, Vi, I will tell Mrs. B. not to put herself to any trouble on our account. I dare say, though, she always has plenty in store, with which to feed the hungry. But it may not be just what she would like to place before the parson's guests."

Violet nodded assent, and Beatrice flitted away to find the housekeeper. Going into the kitchen, she found her lighting a fire; she rushed up to her, and nearly took her breath away in a strong embrace and a resounding kiss, exclaiming. "O Auntie B., I am the happiest little body in the wide, wide world!"

"You certainly appear to be," rejoined the sober matron intent upon her household duties. "You are like a sunbeam."

"Do sit down, you dear old soul and let me tell you the wonderful news which has come to me," urged Beatrice.

"As soon as I light the fire, and fill the kettle, so the water may boil. I let the fire down after tea, it was so warm. We had it early, so Mr. Stuart could go to the Frosts, and return before dark," she continued working and talking at the same time. "But you must not mind me, when your friend is sitting all alone in the other room."

"Never mind her. She will be all right. She is an old friend of Cousin Lan's, and if he should happen in she could entertain him," observed Beatrice with a wise toss of the head.

Apparently satisfied Mrs. Butler sat down with her knitting, and listened to the remarkable narration of Mrs. Moreland's life. Her marriage, her sojourn abroad, the birth, and the supposed death of her child.

"Just think, I came to see Cousin Lan to have him make arrangements about interring his remains in Devon," said she. "I visit the Herrs and find a hale, hearty boy of nineteen months. Don't you think it the best fairy story you ever heard?"

It is a great miracle," solemnly answered Mrs. Butler, rising to remove the boiling tea-kettle. "But I think I heard Mr. Stuart enter the house, just now, and you had better return, and leave me to arrange a little lunch. I wish I had time to make a pan of biscuits; it would help out wonderfully."

"Can't you see, you blind old dear?" cried Beatrice.

"I want to stay with you awhile. If you wish to see Alan Stuart the happiest man on earth, just allow him five minutes to renew his friendship with Violet Morriton. You will have plenty of time for your biscuits, or even to roast a chicken, before either of them will miss me. By all means, you can venture upon the making of your desirable rolls."

"You dear child!" said the enlightened woman. "Is this the lady who sent Alan Stuart out into the world, all alone, to do his great work of helping the poor? Is this the one who broke her engagement to the best man that ever lived, because he became a minister of the gospel? If so, God forgive her, I never can!" she declared most

emphatically.

"I don't know any of the particulars of their separation, Auntie; Violet was once engaged to Alan, and the engagement was broken from some unknown cause. I don't think any one knows the reality of the case in spite of all the surmises. I know Violet is one of the noblest women that lives. Whatever may have been the cause of their misunderstanding it is not for me to say. I think you must

have listened to the gossips for information."

"Nay, nay, my child! I have all my knowledge from the right source. I have known Alan Stuart from a boy. I was housekeeper in the Stuart household for many years, before I crossed the broad ocean to watch over the interests of the only son, at the mother's earnest wish. His sister Evelyn and I have talked it over many a time. Has he not made himself an exile from home for years on account of this woman, let me ask you? Is not his poor mother's heart breaking over the absence of her child? What power can that lady hold over him to keep him from his mother?"

"I cannot answer your questions, Auntie," said Beatrice, much affected at the result of her information. "But, I can safely assure you, that the estrangement will be ended when a satisfactory explanation has been made. If Alan and Violet are satisfied, it would be wrong for any of us not to be. We should rejoice with them, instead of spreading

thorns of bitterness in their way."

"You may be right!" said the wavering woman. "Yet it is very hard to sweep away the prejudices of years, in a few moments. The Lord forgive my stubborn heart! I find that it does not grow as mellow with age as I thought. No one will rejoice more than I shall, at any good fortune which may fall to Mr. Stuart. He deserves the best. His lot has been very hard to bear. I will try the biscuits, as you think there will be sufficient time."

"And I will rest here, till you are ready to join me, unless Violet and Alan come in search of me. Though I dare say by this time, they have forgotten my existence." Beatrice settled herself in a large, old-fashioned rocker, with

the evening paper to await results.

Mrs. Butler went to the pantry and carefully measured the necessary materials. She vigorously stirred the ingredients, stirring, at the same time, all her resentment away. She called Anna, the housemaid, and instructed her to lay the best damask cloth upon the table, and bring out the rare old china. "It will at least show the New York lady that Mr. Stuart has not been neglected in this

strange land," she thought.

Anna brought forth jellies, preserves, and pickles from the well-filled store-room, in addition to cold meats. A tempting repast was quickly provided through her deft fingers. She had scented that something extraordinary was transpiring, and thought she would sustain the credit of the house by displaying the best which it afforded. She even went so far as to visit the kitchen-garden, and pick a large dish of raspberries, by means of a lantern. "They cannot help being good, with the dew on them," she mused. She could think of nothing more, unless it was a few flowers. So she called upon the roses, and gently roused the sleeping beauties from their emerald beds by telling them, "I need you to grace other beauty."

Everything was satisfactorily arranged. It was pronounced perfect; it stood the penetrating test of the matron's scrutiny. She bustled about from kitchen to pantry and dining-room, going the rounds in the same rotation till all was finished. "There!" she exclaimed, "I hope they will

come before things spoil!"

Beatrice had quietly remained in her seat, watching the elaborate preparations for a "little lunch." "I wonder if she is trying to heap coals of fire upon Violet's head," she murmured.

Mrs. Butler joined Beatrice, and resumed her knitting. "I am afraid the biscuits will spoil, waiting for them," she said, as she knit the stitches from one needle to another. "I have been thinking that if Miss Morriton could bury her pride so deep, as to come all this ways to see Mr. Stuart, I had better bury mine, and treat her like a lady. And, I have made up my mind to abide by the promptings of a Christian spirit."

"Well spoken, Auntie! like your own true self! I don't believe you could harbor an ill-feeling, very long, if you tried!" said Beatrice, delighted at the change of opinion

in the old lady's mind.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"I HAVE COME TO COMFORT YOU!"

ALAN STUART had visited the Frosts and ministered unto their needs both materially and spiritually. The family were in great distress. The father was suffering from the effects of a fever, and much disturbed that he was unable to provide for the wants of his household. He found it very trying to receive charity, and in his heart cursed God for his misfortune. Mr. Stuart, with the help of the patient, uncomplaining wife labored faithfully to point out the true way of life to the afflicted man. He contributed a sufficient amount each week for the family support, and employed an eminent physician. So far, his efforts had been received with sullen thanks. His spiritual advice had met with only rebuffs, falling apparently upon stony ground. The knowledge, however, did not discourage him, but tended to a more earnest endeavor. He promised to obtain work for him, whenever he was able to undertake it. He could furnish manuscript for him to copy, for some time; and he knew of others who could do the same. He left the man in a more cheerful frame of mind with this prospect of remuneration awaiting him.

He retraced his steps slowly to the parsonage. His heart was filled with sorrow. He had suffered so deeply himself, that he could fully sympathize with the stricken ones of earth. Only those who have borne like sorrows can conceive of the depths of grief into which the soul is plunged. He felt, that like the Master, he was a man of sorrows,

and one acquainted with grief.

His life was a sacrifice of self, for the alleviation of distress among his fellow-creatures. He could relieve others of their burdens, but patiently bore his own without relief. "Give me grace, O, Lord, sufficient for the day!" was his constant prayer.

On his homeward way, he watched the sun sink slowly down amid the western glow. He saw the brilliant hues of crimson, amber, and amethyst fade imperceptibly into the warm twilight gray, wondering how much fairer the heavenly glory could be. "How typical, it is of my life!" said he as he reached the house. "The roseate hues of youth have faded away, and left me, only the gray."

He silently entered the house with his latch-key thinking deeply of Violet. "What strange persistency of fate is it, that keeps her image constantly before me?" he asked himself. He placed his hat upon the hall table and entered the sitting-room for a few moments' chat with Mrs. Butler,

concerning the Frosts.

The fast-gathering twilight did not permit him to see the occupant of the room very clearly, and the supposition that it could be other than his devoted housekeeper never entered his mind. He threw himself down in a comfortable chair and leaned his head upon his hand, saying, "I am actually so tired, Auntie B., I think a cup of your fragrant tea would refresh me. I found Mr. Frost in an extremely bad mood. He was railing against Providence for placing him in the position of a pauper, and I found it very difficult to converse with him. How strange, that trouble should turn us away from the Father, instead of leading us to him, thereby strengthening the relationship. I learned that he had been a journalist before coming here, and promised him plenty of work, as soon as he was able to perform it. It is better to give a starving man a loaf of bread than one of the Father's promises. He can assimilate it better. Afterwards, when stronger, he may receive the meat. I think, Auntie, I must try and arrange an outing for him and his family at 'Happy Haven,' this summer. The beauties of the place would certainly inspire him. I find my walk home amid the sunset's glow has made me prosy, so I will rest here, awhile before going to the study."

He ceased talking and centered his thoughts upon that ever-wandering sprite which constantly came between him and whatever he undertook. It led him away from the gloomy past, to the bright future. It spanned the chasm of the years, with a single bound. "O, tantalizing vision of happiness, why do you torture me with false hopes? Why do you allure me to a forgetfulness of duty? Will you not let me rest in peace? O, Violet, Violet, will your heart ever turn to me?" he faintly whispered from the anguish of his soul.

The watchful listener caught the faint accents and started from her seat. Softly, as a silver moonbeam falling upon the silent earth, she glided to his side, fearful that the throbbing heart would betray her presence.

"Alan!" she faintly whispered, hardly daring to trust

her own voice.

But he heeded neither the trembling accents, nor the

subtile perfume of violets stealing through the room.

"Alan!" she repeated in firmer tones. "I have come to comfort you in your sorrow! To help you bear your burdens!"

"Oh, my Father!" he cried in anguish. "Save my reason! Let me not fall a victim to delusion! Violet! Violet! Is it really you, or an inhabitant from another sphere?" he exclaimed, starting to his feet in consternation.

"Yes, Alan, it is I! Can't you understand it is Violet

who stands beside you?" she asked.

"Not hardly," he answered, clasping her to his heart. "I have imagined you so often by my side and found it only a passing delusion, that I had no faith in the reality."

"I have come to seek forgiveness for all the wrong which I have wrought. To crave the old place in your heart. Rest assured, Alan, dear, a visitant from another world

does not sue for pardon."

"Oh, my darling, you must not speak of forgiveness. There has never been any resentment in my heart against you. It has always been overflowing with the great love which bound you to me. I have only grown weary in waiting for your summons. I have grown more impatient,

since I learned you were 'so near and yet so far.' O, Violet, had you but sent that little 'come' to me, I would have hastened to the ends of the world for you."

"I know it, dear. But I could not wait for that; it was better for me to come to you, and erase the errors of the

past."

"Let us sit here in the moonlight, Violet, while you tell me how it happens that you are here. I was thinking of you as being in Paris or Germany with Beatrice. Tell me,

have your friends returned to England?"

"No," she calmly answered. "When I learned that you, and you alone were necessary for my happiness, I could not rest till I had started forth upon my mission. Beatrice offered her company, which I gladly accepted, and here I am."

"Blessed Cousin Bee! How hard she has labored for us! How much she will rejoice for this hour! But tell me, does this explain that unintelligible message which I

received a few hours ago, from her?" he inquired.

"Not wholly," she answered merrily. "Bee sent it that way intentionally. She said, it would prepare you, without giving any information, and like a Chinese laundry bill you would know it represented something, I think I shall have to reveal Bee's secret, in order to satisfy your inquiries. I only hesitated from fear that she would like to impart the astounding news."

"Do proceed, darling, and relieve my suspense. Cousin Bee, I can assure, will graciously allow you the privilege."

"When we called at the Herrs, Beatrice found that her

son was alive and well," said Violet.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Alive and well!" Truly, the age of miracles has not passed! What a blessing! Praise the great Father of all! Can you give me the particulars?"

"It appears that the child was supposed to have died from a hemorrhage, a few days after its birth; but it had only fainted. Its frail life hung on a thread for weeks; while the physician would not allow its nurse to inform the parents, as he feared an injury to the brain, which would result in imbecility. After carefully diagnosing the case for a year, he found his fears were groundless, and gave permission to send the knowledge to the mother. The nurse who has charge of him, has written and advertised ineffectually, about six months. When Bee and I arrived, she supposed we had come in answer to some information received. You cannot conceive of Bee's surprise and delight when she learned the astounding news.

"She almost flew to the boy's side, telling me to follow. I did so, and rejoiced with her over her new-found treasure. She held him some time before he awoke. She had been tracing the resemblance to his father, when the child opened his eyes and smiled upon her. She surprised me by crying

out, 'Vi, he looks just like Alan.'

"I asked if she meant 'my Alan,' unconsciously betraying

the secret I had hidden so many years.

"'Yes,' she calmly answered. 'Your Alan is the only one I know.' You might have supposed she was thoroughly acquainted with my sad history. Yet, I ascertained that she only knew we were both unhappy. We sat talking for hours. She, with folded arms around the little one, told me of your noble life. I can never forget the beautiful picture which she made. It was like a representation of the Christ-Mother. It is impressed indellibly upon my memory. She taught me the priceless lesson of forgiveness. She fully illustrated its sweet simplicity. I saw, clearly, my imaginary unsurpassable mountains of distrust dissolve, forever, from existence, through her gentle influence. I realized that the mistake of all these long dreary years was wholly my own. I found that I had been needlessly struggling through the gilded pleasures of life, seeking for happiness, to lull my unsatisfied spirit, and finding none. I perceived the little path which I had always shunned, opening before me with a radiance from on high. It led to happiness and love. It led to you, Alan. I have asked

the Savior's hand to keep me safe, within, and I know,

He will not forsake my feeble footsteps."

"God be praised that He has led you into His blessed light! My poor wounded dove, you have had a rough passage! We will trust that our sorrows are buried in the gloomy past. We will hope that the brighter future will

bring its reward for all the dreary days."

"I can never thank Bee as she deserves. She does a kindness so unconsciously. That reminds me, she wishes to consult you on business, and I will leave that for her to arrange. I think, Alan, we are neglecting her. She left me some time ago, to find Mrs. Butler, and consult her about a cup of tea."

"Did she?" queried Alan. "O, Violet, didn't you understand Cousin Bee's ruse? She left you, that we might clear away the mists of the past. She has the wisdom and tact of both ancient and modern philosophers combined within

that innocent little head of hers."

"Truly spoken," asserted Violet. "I see my powers of

intuition are becoming dwarfed."

"Excuse the neglect of hospitality, won't you, Violet?" asked Alan cheerfully. "I was too busy to think of that cheering beverage. We will go and see if it is ready. I think, in view of this honorable occasion, I might be tempted to indulge in a second cup."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AN ANGEL AT THE FIRESIDE.

"AUNTIE, I have brought you a friend who wishes a cup of your tea. Miss Morriton, let me make you acquainted with Mrs. Butler, my prime supervisor," exclaimed Alan in a merry voice, as he entered the dining-room. "Let me thank you, Cousin Bee, for your great kindness. You have indeed become the peacemaker you wished."

"Thank you. Has Violet told you of the great blessing which has been bestowed upon me?" she asked, anxiously. "I see she has taken my advice, though she scorned it."

"Yes, she informed me of the astonishing restoration of your little son. I rejoice at your fortune, and trust the gracious Father may spare him many years, as a comforter and protector to his faithful little mother. But, what was the advice given Violet?" he asked.

"Don't be too inquisitive, Cousin Lan," responded Beatrice, noticing the blush stealing over Violet's face. Don't try to find out things not intended for masculine

ears, lest you might fall into a snare."

All laughed at the reproof, as Mrs. Butler led the way to the table. Anna suddenly appeared from some invisible place laden with the steaming tea, and the uncertain biscuits, which, in spite of all apologies, turned out to be perfection. It mattered little to either Violet or Alan, whether they were leavened or unleavened. They were so filled with their own happiness, they failed to notice what they were eating.

Beatrice, alone, did ample justice to the bountiful spread. "I am awfully hungry, Auntie B., and your tea is so nice, I can't refrain from satisfying my appetite, now I have the chance. What fine raspberries you have! I must have another saucer of them, and the rich cream! They are so

delicious!"

Anna, who was in the act of bringing hot water to her

mistress, and on the alert to see and hear everything concerning the beautiful ladies, felt amply rewarded for the evening search in the garden.

Mrs. Butler told Alan to conduct the ladies to the parlor,

as they rose from their seats to leave the room.

"Oh, no!" protested Beatrice. "Let's stay in the sitting room; it's much nicer than a shut-up parlor. Can't we have a fire in the grate? I know it is not needed, but it looks more cheerful and social."

"Have your own way, dearie, as you always do," she answered. "It is a good way, I know, as it makes us all

happy."

"Cousin Lan, are you willing to become my little Theo's guardian? I shall require some one to advise me in regard to his education, and whatever may occur. Then I wish to set aside a portion of Mort's wealth for his son. Mort left it all to me, not knowing of our little one's existence, and I do not understand the technicalities of law matters."

"I will gladly assist you, Cousin Beatrice, in whatever way you desire, in regard to your son," answered Alan.

"I shall feel honored in becoming his guardian."

The trio sat by the cheerful fireside enjoying the pleasing recollection of the past, the happy present, and the bright, inviting future. Beatrice made several, ineffectual attempts to leave Violet and Alan, but they saw through her strategy and would not permit it.

"Don't you think Auntie B. will do, without further instructions from you, Bee?" humorously asked Alan.

"Not hardly," replied Beatrice. "On this auspicious occasion there is much to be considered, of which the principal actors are not aware. I cannot remain a silent partner in this company, I am so greatly interested. You must pardon me for giving unnecessary advice. I would like to inquire as to your future. What arrangements have you made?"

"Nothing definite, yet, has been decided upon. I have left everything with Violet. She will return to America in September, and I hope to follow shortly after. Providence

permitting, our marriage will take place in October."

This information was unsatisfactory to Beatrice. She had expected something far different. She wished they would let her suggest a way, "and why not?" she asked herself, "when I am acting as her chaperon."

They saw that the information was far from pleasing her, and wondered why. "Have you any better way to suggest,

Cousin Bee?" asked Alan quizzingly.

"Certainly, I have!" she gravely replied. "And, as you have appealed to me, I can advise you, without being deemed intrusive. You see, Cousin Lan, I am Violet's chaperon. In the absence of her parents, I stand in their place. I recognize the great responsibility resting upon me. Everything, affecting her welfare, is of vast interest to me. I have brought her to you, that some wrong, either real or imaginary, I care not which, might be remedied. The effort has been successful. You are both happy over the result, which has changed the whole current of your lives. Why? I should like to inquire, do you both defer your happiness, like long-drawn-out sweetness?" she asked with the mature wisdom of a matron of fifty.

"What do you mean?" queried Violet.

"Explain yourself," said Alan, "I am in the dark."

"I would change the customary order of things by being married here and taking a bridal trip home to America," she calmly replied. "It would be quite unique, Violet, and entirely out of the ordinary."

"I agree with you there, Bee, though such an idea never

entered my mind," said Violet reflectively.

"Thank you, for the suggestion, Cousin Beatrice, It lies wholly with Violet to decide the matter. I will restrain

my own wishes, and abide by hers," said Alan.

"Just think, Violet," she continued, fully entering into the spirit of the proposition, "think what a deal of anxiety and trouble would be saved by the arrangement. You could have just as nice a wedding here as at home. I will promise that we can make it a grand affair. There are about six weeks before the first of September, which gives ample time to prepare an elaborate trousseau. I would dearly love to superintend the whole business, with Elva's help, and Auntie B.'s."

"Oh, Beatrice, I do not aspire to a brilliant wedding," answered Violet. "Once, nothing else would have satisfied me. Now, I would prefer a quiet one, in some charming

spot, away from the pomp and glare of fashion."

"God grant that your wishes may be gratified, my darling!" responded Alan, fervently. "They coincide with mine. My heart awaits the presence of the household angel, and will gladly welcome her, whenever she comes."

"There is no reason why your wishes should not be granted," said Beatrice. "I know the very place. It is charming Devon. Mort and I thought it a modern Utopia. And, I know, you both will think it a paradise. I was intending to spend my Winter somewhere in Europe, on account of my son, and nothing could be better than to locate at the old place, where we were so happy. I will take a house for a year; ask Mrs. Herr to preside over it, and arrange everything. I already feel the responsibilities of a household upon my shoulders. Of course, Lena will bring the children, and my Theo will have a home among his own kindred. And—" she stopped a moment to breathe.

Alan and Violet grew more and more astonished, at the unfolding of Beatrice's plans. Neither were accustomed to the pleasing process of being provided for. It came like a healing balm to their receptive hearts. They were amazed at the vast resources of ability which qualified her for any emergency. It was very gratifying to receive such care and attention, and they fully appreciated all the busy little lady's efforts. They were happy, and contented to leave all details in her hands, and allowed her to unfold her wonderful plans, which she did with great rapidity.

"You could be married from my house. I think Fairview,

Devon, England, would sound well." she remarked, straying from her subject. "You can be just as quiet as you wish. Or you can have the wedding in the church, and make it a grand affair. You might arrange for the happy event to take place in September; and celebrate the joyous occasion with a few days at 'Happy Haven.' Then you could go to America, and gladden the hearts of the Morritons, and Stuarts, and receive congratulations. Why, Violet, I know it would be the event of the whole season. It would be so unique. Does the proposition meet your approval?"

Alan waited anxiously for Violet to decide. His mind was already settled. He thought it an admirable adjustment, not wholly on account of being a more speedy realization of his hopes but as a safer way out of all worry and perplexity. Yet he waived his opinion till Violet had

expressed hers.

"I think your arrangement a most wonderful one, Bee. If it meets Alan's approval, and I see from his assent, that it does, we will leave the matter in your hands, and accept your sweet kindness. I would prefer, Bee, to be married in your house, it would seem more like home. I could not have selected a more enticing place to begin my new life, than at 'Happy Haven.' I want to visit the scene of Alan's labors. Where he has done so much for the boys. I wish Alan, you would invite all your flock down; I should like to witness their pleasure. I shall never interfere with your noble work, but try to assist, by sharing your burdens."

"Amen," said Alan. "The Father has left the poor of this world to our care, and those are the happiest who heed His charge. There are fields awaiting His children."

"I think you may allow me to depart a little while, now, I have shown you the way out of your difficulty," said Beatrice with an amusing laugh. "I will tell Auntie B. the wonderful news, and ask her advice about many important things. I don't suppose there is any use to ask you, Cousin Lan, to run down to Devon for a few days,

is there? I would like you to assist me in finding a suitable house."

"I can accommodate you, I am happy to say. A young man by the name of Bradford is spending his vacation among friends in my parish, and I know he would accept the place for a short time, as he has already offered his services. I should be pleased to be of any assistance, Cousin Bee. Never hesitate to enlist my aid in any undertaking."

"Never fear," answered Beatrice. "I may require it, in a way you little dream of." She flitted away leaving Violet and Alan to the enjoyment of their new-found happiness. They sat in silence some time, content to let the blissful prospects of the future range uninterrupted through

their hearts.

"Alan," said Violet, "you must continue your mission here. I have told you that I would be your helper, and I pray you to look upon me in that light. 'Whither thou goest, I will go.' Whether you labor here, or in your native land, I will remain by your side. Perhaps, in time, the memory of the dark days will fade away. What blessings I have refused!"

"Nay, Nay, my darling. Do not repine. Do not mar the peace of this heavenly hour, by harrowing in the seeds of regret. It has only been a passing cloud that has obscured your vision awhile. I know that in time, the cloud will dissolve, and you will step forth into the mar-

vellous light of a blessed reality."

"I think, after all, Alan, you knew my heart better than I did. I must write to Unie and mamma and tell them

of our engagement and future plans."

"And, I must make them known to my mother and Evie. How pleased they will be to welcome us back again. I will write to your father and give a satisfactory explanation of the situation. Perhaps your brothers might arrange to be present at our wedding."

"Dr. Herbert might I think," said Violet. "But I am

certain Harry cannot, as he must return to college, some-

time during the month."

"We must draw our happy evening to a close, Violet dear," said Alan. "We have a large correspondence to get through for the morning's mail. We will call Cousin Bee and Mrs. Butler, and return thanks to our heavenly Father for His great mercies. How much better He can provide for our wants than we can ask! Truly, 'It is always darkest before the dawn.' I entered my home amid the gloom and found an angel of light waiting at the fireside."

Mrs. Butler and Beatrice obeyed the summons. A fervent prayer of praise and thanksgiving came from the lips of Alan Stuart, which touched a responsive chord in the heart of each one. At its close, Violet went to the piano and sang that beautiful hymn, "Jesus, Saviour,

Pilot Me."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MARRIAGE.

MRS. MORELAND fully realized the responsibilities resting upon her. It was amusing, at times, to see the grave dignity overshadowing the features. A suitable house was placed at her disposal, which proved to be adapted to every want. The family, consisting of the father, mother and daughter, wished to travel a year. Beatrice engaged it at once, and left it in charge of the same housekeeper. She gave information concerning her boy, and requested that the old nursery be refurnished. "I will leave everything in your hands for the present, as I shall be busy elsewhere; I am liable to come any time; I can't say just when, but soon," she said in leaving her.

Alan and Violet were delighted with the place which Beatrice had chosen. They returned to the parsonage, and met Mrs. Butler's anxious fears with the cheering news. She was fearful that her mistress's son would not have that attention shown which his position merited. Her apprehensions were wholly banished, when Alan informed her that the entire bridal party would spend a day at the parsonage before proceeding to 'Happy Haven.' She thought, with Mrs. Moreland's aid, she would give them a surprising

reception.

The eighth of September was selected for the wedding day. The preparations progressed with great rapidity under Beatrice's supervision. Her ability lay in the art of keeping others constantly employed. The trousseau

was selected in Paris.

Mr. and Mrs. Hervey regarded Beatrice as a most important personage. Every time she met them, she had some remarkable revelation to disclose. "First she tells of the restored child. Then, she gives the news of Violet's engagement, and approaching marriage. And, finally,

I should not be surprised if she married a prince," remarked Elva to her husband. "She is one of those of whom it might be said, 'She is a host within herself,'" he added.

Everything being fairly started, Violet and Beatrice spent a few weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Hervey in visiting Florence, Venice and Switzerland. They reached Vienna in August, charmed with all the wonders of nature and art. There the party was broken again. It was necessary for the matron to be present at Fairview, that all might be in readi-

ness for the approaching event.

Beatrice and Violet left for Germany and spent a day with the Herrs. The mother's heart was gladdened by a cry of welcome from her little son. The announcement of the Morriton and Stuart marriage was not to be compared with the invitation to preside over the home of Mrs. Moreland, to the minds of the Herrs. It occupied only a secondary place in their estimation. And, if they could serve their benefactress, by granting anything within their power they would most cheerfully. Accordingly, the proposition to leave their home, for a time, was favorably received. Everything was put in readiness, awaiting the summons.

Mrs. Moreland and Violet left the next morning, promising to meet the Herrs in Paris on the following day. Their short stay in the city was nearly all occupied with the last

additions to the wedding outfit.

Alan met the party at Dover and saw them safely started upon their journey to Fairview before returning to the parsonage. Baby Theo was a source of amusement throughout the long ride, and proved a blessing by his considerate good behavior.

The unexpected news was received with great rejoicing across the water. It came to the sorrowing mother as a new star of hope, suddenly bursting forth upon the western horizon. She felt its glorious light would guide her through the vale of life. Like the old housekeeper, she saw the resentment which she had diligently cherished so many

years, fade quickly away. She was beginning to count the days that must intervene before she could welcome Alan and Violet. "We must have new gowns, Evie dear," she said, awaking with a new zeal to the interests of life. 'Alan would like us to be present at the reception which the Morritons will give, and I will make the effort and go."

"Certainly, you can try, mamma," said Evie. "If you

are careful I do not think it can injure you."

The news reached Roselands by the means of three letters arriving simultaneously. Mr. Stuart had written Mr. Morriton, and Dr. Herbert; while Violet had sent a long communication to Unie. The father opened his letter first, and read the amazing contents to the mother and daughter. He could hardly credit the words. "We are to be united in the holy bond of matrimony on September eighth, the Lord willing." "Willing!" he repeated; "of course He is willing. I notice He always helps those who help themselves! What does Violet say to you, Unie?" he inquired.

Unie glanced over the contents a few moments before answering, then read as follows: "Tell mamma I am very happy; happier than I ever dreamed of being on this changing earth. I have learned the cause of my unhappiness. I have found the source of true happiness. I have discovered that vast treasury of the Savior's mercies. I have drawn from its mighty depths that missing note which you told me was necessary to complete the harmony of life. My heart is thrilled with rapture when I view

the wonderful provision of Our Heavenly Father.

"Through the kindness of Beatrice, the mistake existing between Alan and me has been rectified; and, we are to be married on the eighth of September. Though it may come as startling news to you, it is only a speedy termination of a very long engagement. I know you all will rejoice with me in my exceedingly great happiness.

"We are to be wedded at Fairview, a beautiful country

house which Beatrice has rented. It is situated in a small seaside town, in the delightful country of Devon. Afterwards we will go to the parsonage, and spend a day that Alan's people may participate in the joyous occasion. From there we go direct to 'Happy Haven,' the place where Alan gives the poor boys of the great city a summer outing. We remain a few days and I suppose the boys will have a jubilee. We have not yet decided what form it shall take. We expect to sail from Liverpool on the fifteenth for home."

Dr. Herbert and Harry had been sailing up the river and did not return until the family had retired. In preparing for rest the Doctor saw his letter upon a table; he took it and carefully scanned its contents, giving only an expressive whistle to convey his astonishment. He called

Harry, and gave it to him to read.

Harry received the letter, glanced at the writing and then at the signature, without being any the wiser. "Why, Doc., what's so important about this, that you couldn't let a fellow rest till morning?" Receiving no reply, he eagerly devoured the startling information regarding Violet.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "I am actually startled out of my wits! I really think it has frightened me out of a year's growth! Nature will never add another cubit to my stature! But, Doc., who is this Alan Stuart? Did I

ever hear of him before?"

Doctor Herbert answered the query by relating what he knew of the episode of the past. It was very brief, only containing the statement that Violet had once been engaged to the same gentleman, but from some unknown reason

the engagement had never been consummated.

"I see," remarked Harry. "A case of 'Auld Lang Syne.' It is quite a romance. Violet could not have selected a more sensational method, if she had tried for years. But, I am suspicious of that widow. I fear she has been the prime minister in the whole affair, and arranged matters to her own satisfaction. Of course, you will accept the invitation, and have the honor of being best man on the

momentous occasion. I don't know why I cannot go with you. I have ample time to witness the marriage, take in all the celebrations, and return in time for the opening of college. O, Doc., let's take the first steamer, and surprise Violet and Mrs. Moreland! In fact, I had better protect you against any designs, as weddings are prevalent, this season, among the Morritons."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CELEBRATION AT 'HAPPY HAVEN.'

DR. HERBERT and Harry arrived quite unexpectedly a week before the wedding. It afforded Violet great pleasure that the family was represented by her three brothers. Harry's presence made a slight change in the programme. Doctor Herbert was to serve as best man; Elva as maid of honor, Miss Ethel Porter, and her friend, Miss Bessie Lowery, had been selected as bridesmaids.

Harry persuaded his sister to allow him to take the Doctor's place. "Why, don't you solicit the Widow Bee to take Elva's?" he asked, quizzingly. "I should not think you could dispense with her valuable services on this

great event of life."

"Thank you, ever so much, Harry for suggesting it. I will see Bee, and get her consent. The change is an improvement."

Beatrice's consent, however, was very hard to gain. "O, Vi!" she exclaimed, "who ever heard of a widow being a maid of honor!"

"It is all the nicer from its being out of the ordinary method. You are laying aside your mourning, so you cannot hesitate for want of a suitable robe. I wish you would consent, Bee; I want you so much. I had thought of Unie occupying this position, if I ever married. And, as I cannot have her, I must entreat you to fill her place."

Beatrice granted the request without consulting her own feelings. She was gratified at this expression of esteem which Violet held for her. It exceeded her hopes, and

raised the buoyancy of her spirits.

The wedding-day dawned bright and clear, banisning every apprehensive fear. The beautiful sunshine flooding the earth, with its genial rays, and scattering its blessings of joy and light, seemed a fitting type of the great love that had risen in their trusting hearts to illumine all their lives.

The spacious rooms at Fairview were tastefully decorated with wild flowers, palms, and rare exotics. Beatrice, with Harry's assistance had designed a small boat, covered, and laden with flowers. This occupied one side of the drawing room. The entrance was through portieres of trailing vines interwoven with fragrant flowers.

Violet and Alan stood within the floral boat amid the gorgeous wealth of odoriferous blooms, and pledged their vows of love. Hand in hand, they stepped forth into the

new path of life opening before them.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Mr. Potter, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Bradford, the assistant of Mr. Stuart.

The bride was charming in a gown of white satin, ornamented richly with duchesse lace. She wore a beautiful necklace of diamonds, a gift from the father; and carried a bouquet of bride's roses.

The bridemaids were dressed in pink, carrying bouquets of the famous Lawson Pink. Mrs. Beatrice Moreland assisted as maid of honor, and even Harry acknowledged

that she was as fair as any of the others.

The bride's brothers, Dr. Herbert Morriton, Professor Hervey Morriton, and Mr. Harry Morriton served as ushers.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Stuart passed their first day of wedded life with the charming hostess. On the following morning they took the train for London, and proceeded, without delay to the parsonage. They were accompanied by Professor Morriton and wife, Doctor Herbert, Harry and Mrs. Moreland. Mr. Porter, and his daughter Ethel joined the party from urgent invitation.

This last accession was very pleasing to Harry Morriton, who considered Miss Ethel Porter, the most sensible young

lady he had ever met.

Mrs. Butler had made provisions for a reception to be held at the church, that the whole parish might attend. Mr. and Mrs. Stuart received the congratulations and best wishes, not only of the parish, but from the whole

community. The poor and rich mingled their blessings together. A bountiful collation was spread in the vestry, and each was remembered with a box of cake, in parting.

The members of the church and congregation presented their beloved pastor and his bride, with a large Bible bound in morocco and gilt, as a token of their great esteem. Mr. Stuart received the gift with appropriate remarks, and gladdened their hearts by saying, "Mrs. Stuart wishes to present the church with the sum of One Thousand Dollars, for its own use; also, a similar amount to be distributed among the poor of this parish."

A burst of thanks surged forth from their grateful hearts in murmured praise. But the boys of the Sunday School were more expressive. One little fellow, braver than the others shouted out, "Three cheers for the beautiful lady!" They were lustily given by the boys, and many of the older

ones, and were appreciated from their sincerity.

It was Violet's first meeting with the poor and needy. Hitherto, she had avoided their presence, for fear of contamination, or contagion of infectious diseases which she always associated with poverty. Now, she was learning that wholesome truth, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The spontaneous outburst was a new mark of

approbation.

Great preparations had been made for the wedding festivities at 'Happy Haven.' Even Auntie B. was persuaded to join the party when they left the parsonage. Mr. Bradford, assisted by Mr. Frost, had carried out the proposed plans of all the interested ones, and introduced a few novel ones of his own. Fifty of the poor boys from London were invited for the two-days' celebration. Mr. Bradford escorted them to their destination the day previous to the arrival of the party, and presented each boy with a suit of new clothes, in the name of Mrs. Alan Stuart. Vociferous cheers and hurrahs filled the air from the expanding lungs of the astonished boys. They entered fully into the spirit of the occasion, and went so far as to propose some

startling novelties, as an expression of their good will. One of their plans was to escort the bridal party to the house, with music; another, to have a grand display of fireworks. To their unbounded delight, Mr. Bradford sent a large order to a city manufacturer. Several designs were original. One proposed a true lover's knot, with the names of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Stuart interwoven. Another patriotic little fellow wanted the "Stars and Stripes" of America, and the "Union Jack" of England, with clasped hands between. Mr. Bradford considered it a valuable suggestion, and told them they should have it for a closing piece.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart were wholly unprepared for the great demonstration which greeted their arrival. The boys had spread the news throughout the vicinity, and it had reached the surrounding country. If all the reports were reliable, then it was certainly an occasion worthy of royalty. The marriage of the rich American lady to a comparatively unknown preacher among the poor, formed the topic of news and conversation in the summer hotels. The bands

from several of the houses offered their services.

As the bridal party left the railway coaches, three bands struck up Lohengrin's Wedding March, and fell into line. The musicians were closely followed by the boys, marching in twos, and keeping step to the music. These preceded the wedding coaches, and led through leafy arches which had been erected by the interested public.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart entered 'Happy Haven' amid the ringing of bells, and the glorious outburst of music. They received the congratulations of the multitude with cordiality, and expressed their thanks to the bands for their soulstirring strains. Violet silently consecrated herself, anew,

to the Master's service.

"Mrs. Stuart has a little matter arranged for the benefit of the boys, this evening, and I think we may require your aid in helping them exhibit their joy," said the pastor inviting the bands to participate in the coming entertainment. It was the boys' turn to be surprised, and many were the conjectures entertained in regard to the subject. Almost everything that one could think of, except the right one,

was proposed, in the short time which remained.

Their wonderment was not lessened any when they were invited to enter the large tent. They saw Mr. and Mrs. Stuart seated before a small table holding a pile of blank books. Mr. Stuart still further puzzled them, by calling the name of each in alphabetical order. Mrs. Stuart gave one of these books to each boy, as he responded to his name. They stood waiting for an explanation, not realizing their new possession.

"Boys!" said Mr. Stuart, enjoying their bewildered looks, "these little books tell you, that the sum of Fifty Dollars has been placed to your credit in the bank. Mrs. Stuart has kindly given you this sum, that you may be enabled to take better care of yourselves. She only placed a few restrictions upon you, in regard to its use. If you will open your books, you will find a little note from her, and the sum of

Five Dollars, to spend, as you may think best."

Further remarks were lost in the deafening volley of thanks which poured from their throats, like a cannonade. They jumped and shouted, and cheered to their hearts' content, till their din was lost finally amid the patriotic airs of the bands.

Each little recipient's heart overflowed with love to the bountiful lady. He read the note from her hand, asking him never to use tobacco, or intoxicating liquors, and vowed in his beart, he would please her. Already, he had assumed a new dignity to himself; he felt as though he had increased in stature since the preceding day. Visions of prosperity floated before every happy lad. He could go into business, when he was a little older; he could have a store, or a house, or a ship to send all over the world. In short, the small sum assumed the magnitude of millions.

The second day was passed in a similar round of enjoyment, by the boys. They had all the fun they wished, with

plenty of fruit and ice cream to regale themselves. Harry joined them in all their sports, and won their praise by proposing several new games. The greatest feature of the whole celebration, in their estimation, was reserved for the evening. They told the plan to Harry under the most solemn vows of secrecy.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart entered fully into all the enjoyment of their many guests. They noticed the extensive preparations for the great display of fireworks with evident satisfaction, thinking it another method of entertainment for

the gratification of the little ones.

The boys were quite impatient for the darkness. They besieged Harry with questions, shortly after sunset, asking if he did not think it time for the band to begin, and so forth.

"Don't you know, boys," he said decisively, "that fire-

works are no good until it is fully dark?"

"Of course, we do!" they all agreed, delighted at the appeal to their judgment. "We'll wait till the right time."

Their patience was amply rewarded when the orchestra sent forth the beautiful strains of Schubert's serenade. This was followed by the Peasant's Wedding March, and other brilliant selections. The programme was finely rendered, and gave "Sousa's Hands Across the Sea," as a finale.

The boys, to their great delight, were allowed to touch off the pinwheels, and send up the rockets. These came alternately, making the sky radiant with countless shooting stars of irredescent hues. The greatest feature of the exhibition were the set pieces which were reserved for the last. Noted men, of different nations, were first presented; these were quickly replaced by floral designs, perfect in their colorings. A few moments of silent expectation passed over the vast assembly, as the pieces designed by the boys, were ignited. Both burned at the same time. As the glowing fires revealed the names of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Stuart with the knot of love between, the pent-up

enthusiasm of the boys burst its bonds, and swept like a deluge from their throats. The Stars and Stripes, and the Union Jack with clasped hands extending from each national flag stirred the loyal hearts of the whole multitude into cheer after cheer, till the very air seemed rent with applause. In the midst of this great demonstration the

band struck up the music, "God Save the King."

It is a typical national hymn. Dear alike to both Americans and English. Each calls it his own, whenever he hears the thrilling strains. So closely are they interwoven, that one may sing his country's ode, while another chants his praises to his King, in perfect harmony. It was a most appropriate ending of the wedding festivities, showing the friendliness existing between the mother country, and her independent offspring.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

RETROSPECTION.

VIOLET'S thoughts reverted to the past. She contrasted its ideal visions with the blessed realities of the present The difference was so great, as to be scarcely creditable. In the by-gone days, she had planned for an elaborate. affair. She would select only the richest and costliest of robes; precious stones, and rare gems should contribute their scintillating charms to her bridal attire. All that wealth could bestow was freely lavished at her feet. Even, the treasures of the earth were to be sought, that her demands might be satisfied. She would have her nuptial day, one that should never be forgotten. It should surpass all others, by its beauty, elegance, and richness. It should be the crowning event of her life. "And why," she asked herself, "should it not mark an epoch in the history of the age in which I live?" She never dreamed, but what such a prestige would insure the brighest attainable happiness.

How differently had the hopes of youth been consummated! How vain and frivolous they seemed to her now, as memory opened the closed pages to the clear light of truth! "Are these self-accusing deeds, all my own?" she murmured. "Alas! it is only too true! The recording angel makes no errors in our histories. They are indelli-

ble, and can only be effaced by a divine Hand."

Comforted by the assuring knowledge, that the Master's Hand was guiding her footsteps, she saw she was better prepared to enjoy the great happiness with which she had been blessed. The dark, dreary days of the past, so full of sorrow, were necessary for the present joy. They had silently and stealthily carried away the bitter resentment of pride, till the mind had been relieved of its overwhelming burden. The ceaseless process had gradually turned the stony barrenness of the heart into rich, mellow soil, wherein

the seeds of "faith, hope, and charity" had found an abiding place, and brought forth fruit, "an hundred fold!" The wolf of despair, which she had clasped with Spartan fortitude so closely to her bosom, that it had lacerated her very vitals through all the long, weary years, was buried in oblivion, never to be raised again. The wounds were safely healed though the scars were still sensitive to the touch.

From these retrospective glimpses came the knowledge of many valuable truths. The intricate wanderings over burning deserts and boundless plains were but the diverging ways of self-will, ever leading its followers astray. Its deluded victims struggle on unconscious of the land near by, till they sink exhausted with fatigue, and catch the fragrance. Then, they retrace the steps of the long toil-some journey, instead of stepping across the way, into light, joy and peace, and rest.

How simple and easy it seems, as we look back upon the past! We can wander for years, through the wilderness of darkness, and despair, or enter at once into the land abounding in everything good. Strange perversity of

human nature to choose the hardest way!

Violet saw that the great aim of creation was to bring man into harmony with his Maker. To accomplish this he must employ the time in taking charge of those things committed to his trust. There can be no shirking from responsibilities. Every one must take his share. It is only of those to whom much is given that much will be required. The one, little hour's labor is just as acceptable to the Master of the vineyard, as the long, weary toil of the day. The quality of the work is tested by the willingness of the heart, rather than by quantity from a superior hand. Labor invites and awaits every one. Each has, as it were, his own little garden to dress and keep. Even though he reaches out for greater responsibilities, it is the little inferior task that lies before him which must not be overlooked. He must watch, and slay the "little foxes that spoil the vines," if he would gather the lucious grapes.

For the first time there dawned upon Violet's vision a panoramic view of the manifold opportunities awaiting She had already learned the antidote for sorrow, when she gave her sympathy to Lucy Bradley. She had forgotten the little act of kindness, till she beheld the assuring words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." The golden words shone with a radiance from heaven, illumining all the unknown way. She realized that the great wealth over which she was mistress, was only hers, for a little while. She must resign it all at the close of life's busy day. She had never supposed the suffering ones were appealing to her. True, she knew that her mother and sister Unie, had many charitable schemes on their hands, but argued that as they had nothing of more importance, it was a necessary factor in the passing away of time. Any interesting cases which had been presented, she had recompensed with a check, thereby saving herself the "dreadful" sight of the miseries of the poor.

The unbounded delight, and great appreciation of the poor waifs from the great city had shown their conditions under the most favorable circumstances. "If such a little gift as a few dollars can yield them so much enjoyment, it is certainly the best investment which one can make. The opportunities are limitless, and the returns sure," said Violet to herself. "I have speculated many years, for happiness and have failed. When I thought I had it safely secured, it slipped away with tantalizing mockery amid the echoes

of the last sweet pleasure."

"Alan," said Violet, "I have been thinking that I can assist you in carrying on your noble work among the poor. The Master has intrusted me with ample means which I willingly devote to His service. You must not give up your mission here, on my account; let me help you in carrying it forward. I remember, in the former days, you wished to attempt something of this kind, in your native city. We can do that now. I think we could spend part of our time with each. Don't you think it could be done?"

"Yes, my darling," acquiesced Alan. "It might though I had never thought of it. The way before me was rather obscure. I felt I could never give up my labors here, while duty called me back to the old home again. Your proposition comes like a beacon light to a struggling sailor. I can leave the chapel and parish in Mr. Bradford's competent hands. He can ably meet all the requirements. I will ask him to employ Mr. Frost in whatever manner he can. I trust, in time, the worthy man may be led into the light."

"Why not leave 'Happy Haven' in his charge?" she asked. "There are so many needed improvements, which I should dearly love to see here. He might be a general overseer of the whole. I will give whatever amount you think necessary to meet all expenses. Allow me to do this, Alan. You have done so much, all alone, I would like to

add my mite."

"You shall do whatever you wish. I leave it wholly to you. I can hardly realize that I am favored with such a

helpmeet. Tell me your plans, my dear."

"First, of all, I would build a large pavilion-like house for the boys," responded Violet. "I would have it large enough to accommodate, not only fifty, but two or three hundred. It should be a substantial summer-house, provided with all necessary requirements. The basement would serve for cooking and the keeping of supplies; the first story, for dining-rooms, parlor, and reading-room; the second, for sleeping apartments; while the attic could be left in one large hall, suitable for a gymnasium, music-room, or general play-room, in case of stormy weather. What do you think of the plan?"

"I think it a most worthy object, most admirably planned," answered the appreciative husband. "I see you have furnished Mr. Frost with employment for some time. We must acquaint him with the plans in the early morning,

before we start upon our way."

"Yes," resumed Violet, "I feel more than a passing interest in 'Happy Haven.' It has shown me the true way

of happiness. Every one of those fifty little boys, was a messenger of peace to my soul. As the dove bearing the olive branch showing the subsiding of the waters, returned to the Ark for safety, so their tiny hands stretched out to me with piteous appeals to save them from the engulfing waters of poverty, neglect and sin. And with God's help, and yours, my kind husband, I will heed their cry of distress,

and bring gladness to their sorrowing hearts."

"Amen! The Father will grant your prayer," responded Alan. "Violet, dear, the hope that you would sometime see this day, has buoyed me up through all my work. I recognized the great resources of your noble heart. The dream of youth has been more than fulfilled. You surprise me with your total abnegation of self. I feel a greater incentive to labor among our fellow-creatures. You have brought me not only the greatest of all earthly joys, but a deeper trust in my Savior. Let us consecrate ourselves, anew, to His blessed work, and meet, hand in hand, all the vicissitudes of life."

On submitting the proposition to Mr. Frost, it was found that there was no hinderance. He had gained his livlihood as a draughtsman before the more enticing profession of journalism caused him to abandon it. He listened intently to Mrs. Stuart's plans, and informed her that he would submit drawings for inspection, in a few days.

Mr. Stuart asked him to become the steward and guard the interests of the estate till his return. The unexpected request was immediately granted. "I consider it a great honor, Mr. Stuart, I can assure you. I will do my best

for you and yours," replied the delighted man.

Satisfactory terms were arranged, and everything pertaining to the new house was to be under his supervision,

after an approval of the selected designs.

"I shall depend on you to have everything in readiness, when I return next year, Mr. Frost," said Violet, as she bade him good-bye. The boys certainly deserve better quarters, and it rests upon you, whether they have them or not."

The bridal party left "Happy Haven," amid a shower of rice and old shoes, accompanied with the din of drums, horns, and whistles from the juvenile admirers. For the good of the general public, it was deemed wise for Mr. Bradford to escort them home by a later train.

On reaching London, the pleasant company was broken. Mrs. Moreland found it necessary to return to her son, at Fairview. She was accompanied by Mr. Porter, Ethel,

and her friend, Miss Lowery.

"We will be ready to welcome you on your return, next year," said Beatrice, as she bade adieu to the Morritons and Stuarts.

"I wish we were coming, too, don't you, Doc?" said

Harry, speaking from the abundance of his heart.

Doctor Herbert's answer was not expressed orally. If it had been, it would have coincided with his brother's wish.

The remaining party consisting of the Rev. Alan Stuart, and wife, Prof. Hervey Morriton, and wife, Dr. Herbert Morriton, and Harry Morriton sailed from Liverpool on the fifteenth of the month for home. They were much pleased to find that Captain Gray was in command of the steamer bearing them to the American port.

CHAPTER XL.

UNISON.

HAD Violet planned to make her marriage the most sensational event of the season, she could not have succeeded better. A romance rested over the whole affair making it specially interesting. Papers containing a full account of the wedding ceremony, and the receptions had been forwarded by the irrepressible brother Harry. He had dabbled in journalism during the past year, and his pleasing epigramatic sketches had been well received, and solicited. The articles of information from his fluent pen and ready imagination created just the effect which he desired. He said just enough to allow dame rumor full scope for her prolific powers of circulation. She left a trail of mystery in her untiring flights, which her followers solved with their own interpretations.

The power of dissemination with discrimination is most valuable; used without the latter restriction, it becomes simply a source of annoyance. The circulated reports concerning Alan Stuart's prestige had reached a great magnitude throughout the Morriton Society. He was supposed to be a multi-millionaire from the munificence of the wedding gifts. Some said, he must be a younger son of a duke, and had been set apart for the ministry. Others thought he must have been descended from the royalty, as his name clearly proved the relationship to the unfor-

tunate Stuarts.

All conjectures were laid aside, on the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart. Morriton House was thrown open for a grand reception, and the dear "four hundred" presented their congratulations. The bride's brothers assisted as ushers and astonished the expectant guests when they presented them to plain Mr. and Mrs. Alan Stuart, instead of Lord and Lady. Their astonishment was still further

increased when it leaked out in some unknown way, that Violet Morriton had been previously engaged to this very man. In fact, they had been engaged ten long years. They concealed their pique and vied with each other, in the warmth of extended congratulations.

"How awfully nice of you, Vi, to be married in such a unique way!" exclaimed Louise Barker, near the close of the evening's festivities. "How awfully sweet, to get out of the old stereotyped way! I think I should like to

imitate your way, it is so awfully novel!"

The meeting between Mother Stuart, and her son Alan, a few hours previous, was very affecting. The mother and sister received Violet with open arms. Violet proposed that they should take her boudoir to talk over the past. "You see, I have so much to communicate to mamma and Unie, that I am judging Alan by myself. So you will excuse me, I trust, if I leave you three to enjoy yourselves without interruption. Unie is waiting for me, and I will stop only a short time."

All the old lingering regrets were banished by Violet's careful forethought. The mother's heart appreciated the protecting care, and she saw through this act, that she had

gained instead of losing, by the marriage of her boy.

"I cannot tell you, mother, how pleased I am to see you here! It was a great surprise to find you waiting; I would have proposed it, but thought you unequal for the journey. How well you are looking!" he said imprinting a kiss upon her cheek.

"Yes," replied the gratified mother. "I know I am much improved. Your good news acted like a tonic upon my shattered nerves, giving new life and energy. Oh, my boy, it is so good to see you, once more, after all the long, weary years of waiting! Shall you leave us again?" she asked with trembling accents.

"Oh, mother, do not let your anxiety shadow our reunion! We will let the future rest with the present and enjoy the blessings of this day. The work which invited me in the past, calls to-day, with a more urgent summons. Though I have found the waiting hard, I knew that God, in His good time, would open the way. Blessed be His holy name!"

The work among the poor and neglected of their own city was discussed, and arrangements made for its prosecution. Mother and daughter were gratified when Alan informed them that he and Violet would spend a portion of their time with each interest.

"How was all this wonderful change brought about?" inquired Evie. "Your letter before the one announcing the marriage betrayed no hint of the good news."

"I can only say, through Cousin Beatrice. I scarcely

know myself." he answered meditatively.

"What a change has taken place, Unie, dear, since I left you here, a few short weeks ago!" exclaimed Violet, as she seated herself beside the sister's couch. Perhaps, mamma, you and Aunt Lida are unaware of the little prophetess in your midst. She has been as a guiding star to my weary feet struggling forth to the path of duty. She patiently listened to all my awful tales of woe; and philosophical doubts that had become deep-rooted with the scientific research of years. Out of all the chaos of unbelief came the comforting assurance of a Wisdom greater than my own. Science has clearly shown that a part cannot be greater than the whole, to which it belongs. Reason, at once, convinced me of my error. Man cannot be higher than his Creator! But, for Unie's gentle ministrations, and sweet counsel, I should still be struggling amid the deep waters of doubt and despair.

"Poor little suffering one, you have unconsciously taught me the lesson of patience. I have learned that we can labor for the good of others in whatever station we may be placed. Think of the vast amount of joy the 'Lotus Leaves' have given. I shall take several copies to 'Happy Haven,' when I return, for the boys and tell them about the little

authoress."

After a bridal tour of a few weeks, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Stuart returned to Massachusetts, and settled in one of the suburban towns, near the capital. He commenced his labors, by giving his services to a needy church unable to settle a pastor; opened an evening school, and sought an acquaintance among the poor. The work was carried on in the same manner, as that in England. Plans for the new home at "Happy Haven" had been received and accepted; and it was already in progress, under the efficient management of Mr. Frost.

Mrs. Stuart was her husband's helper, and valuable assistant in every good work. The dream of youth had been realized. She was a leader of the people! Though in a different way. The dream had been the exalted position attainable only by wealth, which drew its envious followers. The realization was the high calling to the Master's service. It led through the humble ways of life among the weak and lowly. The noble work brought its own reward. The faltering speech, and tearful eye were sweeter thanks than the flattering praise of attendant friends.

Truly, Violet Morriton had saved her life from being wrecked! She had grasped the anchor of hope, and was safe through all the storms of life! She had discovered that priceless pearl which brings true happiness to its possessor! Her heart beat in unison to the Master's touch! The dissonance of the past was lost in a grand sweet har-

mony! She was thoroughly in tune!

